THE TIMES

Thursday November 24 2022 | thetimes.co.uk | No 73949

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Deborah Ross
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Britons told how to save energy

● Chancellor warns of 'blackmail by Putin' unless action is taken ● Official campaign will help public to reduce their bills

Steven Swinford Political Editor

Ministers are preparing a £25 million public information campaign to encourage people to reduce their energy bills by turning down boilers, switching off radiators in empty rooms and taking showers instead of baths.

Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, said yesterday that all households had a responsibility to cut energy use by as much as 15 per cent to stop Britain from being "blackmailed" by President Putin.

The Times has been told that the government has drawn up plans for a "full-scale" public information campaign to be led by ministers and celebrities and with broadcast adverts, social media messaging and online advice.

Officials have identified eight changes to save up to £420 a year with no loss of comfort. They include reducing the temperature of boilers, which can save £80, turning off the heating when going out, which can save £105, and turning off radiators in empty rooms, which can save £105. Other measures, such as turning off electrical devices rather than keeping them on standby, can save £55 and those who take frequent baths can save £15 by using the shower once a week. Advice to turn down thermostats or take shorter showers has been rejected amid concerns that it could affect health and risk being seen as "nannying".

Ministers will also encourage people to take up low-cost energy efficiency measures, such as loft insulation, cavity wall insulation and thermostatic radiator valves. In the autumn statement Hunt announced a further £6 billion in energy efficiency funding from 2025.

Rishi Sunak overturned a decision by Liz Truss, his predecessor as prime minister, to block plans for a public information campaign. She was said to be "ideologically opposed" to it, despite being advised by colleagues that it was a "no-brainer". Ministers now want to start the campaign before Christmas.

Hunt told the Treasury select committee yesterday: "For most people, we need you to play your part in reducing our energy dependency on what Putin chooses to do in Ukraine.

"That isn't just at a national level but that's for every household. We think that the £500 that we're offering to help people save next year, at current gas prices, if people do the 15 per cent, they could save that £500 themselves in the amount they pay in the years that follow. So we're trying to help people to help themselves. We're giving them a cushion this year and next. But we do need people to change their behaviour."

It is being modelled on energy-saving campaigns in France and Germany, but with a significant difference. The former have been focused on the "patriotic duty" to preserve energy after Russia turned off gas supplies, but Britain's campaign will focus on saving money. Hunt said that people would be joining

Continued on page 7

ULRIK PEDERSEN/DEFODI IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES



Gagging order **Germany showed their view of Fifa's refusal to allow the wearing of One Love armbands before their shock 2-1 defeat to Japan.** Pages 10-11; The Game

Court deals blow to Scots independence

Kieran Andrews Scottish Political Editor

Nicola Sturgeon will stake her political career on winning more than half of Scotland's votes at the next general election on the issue of independence.

The Supreme Court unanimously dismissed yesterday the first minister's claim that Holyrood could organise a referendum without the agreement of Westminster. In response Sturgeon said that she would push to brand the next election to the UK parliament, expected in 2024, as a "de facto referendum".

Under this plan, the Scottish government would, in effect, declare independence by trying to open separation talks with ministers if more than 50 per cent of voters north of the border backed nationalist parties. A poll of 1,006 Scottish voters released last night by *Channel 4 News* found that 50 per cent would vote SNP at the next election; 51 per cent said their vote should be used as a mandate to negotiate independence.

Claim of oppression dismissed, page 6
The SNP's record of failure has been exposed, leading article, page 33

Relief for air travellers as 100ml limit on liquids set to end

Ben Clatworthy
Transport Correspondent

The ban on air passengers carrying more than 100ml of liquids in hand luggage is set to be ditched by 2024, The Times has been told.

Travellers at big airports in Britain will not face limits on the amounts of drinks, creams, make-up and other liquids they can take on board, under the plans. Laptops will also no longer need to be removed from hand luggage, speeding up the time it takes passengers to pass through airport security.

Airports have been given a deadline of mid-2024 to install more advanced CT security scanners, similar to those used in hospitals, which will enable the change in policy. People failing to remove items from their bags, or travelling with large bottles of liquids and creams, are the biggest cause of delays at security.

The 100ml rule was introduced 16 years ago after the foiled Islamist transatlantic terrorist plot in 2006, in what was believed to be a temporary measure. Terrorists planned to bring down seven flights leaving Heathrow using liquid explosives disguised as soft drinks. It would have been al-Qaeda's biggest attack in the West since 9/11.

Ministers have been carrying out a review and a formal announcement is expected. New 3D baggage screening equipment is being tested at Heathrow and Gatwick. The Department for Transport (DfT) has told big airports that legacy screening must be replaced in full by the summer of 2024.

Insiders said the change would "prove a game-changer", with reduced queues for security and less use of plastic at airports. Passengers will no longer have to have liquids in plastic bags.

"We are slowly rolling them out," John Holland-Kay, chief executive of Heathrow, said. "We have just started the expansion of the security area in Terminal 3, which will have more CT scanners and have a deadline of mid-2024 from the DfT. By then the normal passenger experience will be that liquids stay in bags."

Boris Johnson announced the trial of

Continued on page 2

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VISIT…

LANZAROTE Caliente.com

Today's highlights

7.15am **Michael Gove**, levelling-up secretary
11am The Tory Exodus: **Matt Chorley** looks at why young Conservative MPs are standing down at the next election
2pm **Mariella Frostrup** chats to **Don McCullin**, celebrated photojournalist
3.35pm **Jane Garvey** and **Fi Glover** interview the comedian **Tom Allen**
8.35pm The Olympic gold medallist **Denise Lewis**, right



TIMES RADIO
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TODAY'S EDITION

Health service flexibility call
The NHS staffing shortfall will be solved only if doctors and nurses are more flexible about their job descriptions, according to a study for the King's Fund and Engage Britain think tanks by Bill Morgan, Rishi Sunak's health adviser. **Page 4**

Online fraud breakthrough
Police are getting in touch with 70,000 victims of online fraud in Britain after tracking activity on an illegal website that enabled thieves to impersonate callers from legitimate banks. Criminals, thought to have stolen £48 million, paid a fee to use the site. **Page 5**

Blackouts after Ukraine attack
More than two thirds of Ukraine's 24 regions reported blackouts, as well as neighbouring Moldova, after Russia began a new wave of missile attacks on Kyiv's energy infrastructure, leaving millions of people without heating and running water. **Page 34**

COMMENT
The 'no surrender' gang of Tory MPs is preventing progress on improving our relations with the EU
IAIN MARTIN, PAGE 31

Legal doubt on trading strategy
MPs on the Commons work and pensions committee were told by bond market experts that liability-driven investment, the strategy that amplified the gilts market crisis after the Truss government's September mini-budget, was "almost certainly illegal". **Page 39**

Raab criticised over rights bill
Lawyers have criticised Dominic Raab for reviving plans since his reappointment as justice secretary to replace the Human Rights Act with a bill of rights. The move would lessen the influence of the European Court of Human Rights on UK courts. **Law, page 60**

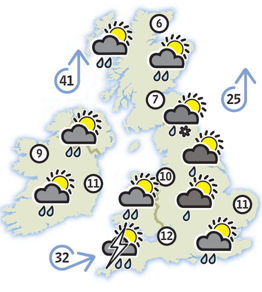
United's fans are selling point
Manchester United believe their global fanbase, estimated at 1.1 billion, will lure potential buyers away from Liverpool to Old Trafford, with interest likely to come from US internet giants as well as other American investors and the Middle East. **Page 74**

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THE WEATHER



Blustery with cloud and rain spreading eastwards, although mainly dry in the east. **Full forecast, page 64**

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Christmas postal strikes to go ahead as 9% pay offer rejected

Andrew Ellson
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

Christmas and Black Friday deliveries will be heavily disrupted by strikes after the postal workers' union rejected a renewed pay offer.

The Communication Workers Union confirmed that members would walk out today and tomorrow, followed by another eight days of strikes this month and next.

The announcement came after Royal Mail presented a "best and final offer" yesterday. The deal included an enhanced pay offer of up to 9 per cent over 18 months and a new profit share scheme for employees.

The offer was said to have been sweetened by dropping a demand that staff must work on Sundays, while "family-friendly" shifts were offered so that workers could finish in time to pick up their children from school.

However, the union rejected the terms, saying that it refused to accept a deal that would turn Royal Mail into a "gig economy-style parcel courier reliant on casual labour".

It added that the plans would involve "thousands of compulsory redundancies" and said the pay offer amounted to a "wholly inadequate", non-backdated 3.5 per cent rise.

Dave Ward, its general secretary, said: "We are disappointed that instead of reaching a compromise to avoid major disruption, Royal Mail have chosen to pursue such an aggressive strategy. We will not accept that 115,000 Royal Mail workers — the people who kept us connected during the pandemic and made millions in profit for bosses and shareholders — take such a devastating blow to their livelihoods.

"These proposals spell the end of Royal Mail as we know it and its degradation from a national institution into an unreliable, Uber-style gig economy company. Make no mistake about it: British postal workers are facing an Armageddon moment. We urge every member of the public to stand with their postie and back them like never before."

Royal Mail workers are due to stage seven strikes next month, including on Christmas Eve, in the long-running dispute over pay, jobs and conditions.

The union said its members would walk out today, tomorrow and next Wednesday, as well as on December 1, 9, 11, 14, 15, 23 and 24. Black Friday is this week while "cyber Monday" — one of the busiest online shopping days — is next week.

Royal Mail bosses are believed to have told union leaders that if the strikes went ahead, previously tabled deals on pay and working conditions would be withdrawn. The new pay offer was conditional on the union agreeing to workplace reforms aimed at transforming Royal Mail into a parcels-focused, seven-day-a-week operation.

The service has growing financial struggles. Royal Mail said last week it could lose as much as £450 million this year after parcels and letter volumes fell in the face of higher competition and a contracting economy.

For the first six months of its financial year, Royal Mail reported worsening like-for-like operating losses of £219 million, dragging International Distributions Services, its parent holding company, sharply into the red.

In the three months to the end of June, Royal Mail said it was losing £1 million a day. In its second trading quarter, to the end of September, those losses rose to £1.4 million a day.

In contrast, in the first half of last year the company made a profit of £235 million, helped by the online shopping boom intensified by the pandemic.

Don't change EU laws, Sunak told

Harry Taylor

Rishi Sunak has been told to drop plans to remove EU-derived law from the statue book by several business, legal, worker and environmental groups.

The alliance of more than a dozen organisations including the Trades Union Congress, the Institute of Directors (IoD) and the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, said the proposed changes would cause difficulties for several sectors.

In a letter sent to Grant Shapps, the business secretary, last night the alliance said the plans would create further uncertainty for businesses.

Roger Barker, the director of policy and governance at the IoD, said: "Getting to grips with any resulting regulatory changes will impose a major new burden on business which it could well do without."

Brexiteers have trumpeted the Retained EU Law Bill, saying it is vital to create distance between the UK and the EU.

Jacob Rees-Mogg, the former minister for Brexit opportunities, has said the bill would "restore parliamentary sovereignty" and remove problematic rules and regulations. He said: "This bill is first of all of fundamental constitutional importance because it is removing the supremacy of EU law."

A government official told the Financial Times that it would continue with the policy: "This will allow us to ensure our laws and regulations best fit the needs of the country, including making sure we continue to protect and enhance workers' rights and support jobs."

Concerns have been raised that the policy could be detrimental to workers' rights and environmental protections. The letter says the proposal would overturn "decades of case law" and make the "interpretation of the law highly uncertain". This could affect holiday pay, safe working hours and laws governing the labelling of meat and eggs.

The government's regulatory and policy committee has already said the impact assessment for the bill is "not fit for purpose".

Nick von Westenholz, director of trade at the National Farmers' Union, said the farming industry supported a systematic review of EU-derived laws to improve the regulatory regime that governs farming but warned that the rush could worsen an already uncertain business environment.

He said: "The unnecessarily tight deadlines that flow from the sunset clauses, and the sweeping legislative powers that will be given to ministers without proper parliamentary oversight, are very worrying."

It's time for peace on Brexit, Iain Martin, page 31

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
Liquid limit to be lifted for flights

the new technology in 2019, but its introduction has been delayed by the pandemic, when passenger numbers collapsed.

The new CT scanners produce a high-resolution 3D scan of passengers' bags, allowing operators to inspect a bag from every angle. Legacy machines produce only a 2D image of luggage.

Passengers are required at present to remove tablets, laptops and liquids from their cabin baggage. Liquids must not exceed 100ml and must be in a clear plastic bag. Airport bosses are concerned that passengers will face mixed messages before 2024.

"As the scanners become more commonplace it will be the case that in some lanes passengers are told not to take stuff out their bags while in other lanes they will still need to," an aviation source said. "The 100ml rule will stay in place until the rollout of the new technology is complete and is a decision for the DfT."

Officials said the policy was under review, although an announcement is expected before Christmas. The trial of the technology started at Heathrow in 2019. Grant Shapps, the transport secretary at the time, said that, if successful, it could "mean an end to passengers having to use plastic bags or rationing what they take away with them".

The technology was introduced at Shannon airport in Ireland this year, and the 100ml rule was scrapped. The airport said it had "halved the time passengers spend going through security".

Behind the story

It was an audacious and terrifying plan to bring down seven passenger aircraft over the Atlantic Ocean using liquid explosives disguised as soft drinks (Ben Clatworthy writes).

The plot was al-Qaeda's biggest in the West since 9/11 and, similarly to that horrific day in 2001, it would change the face of flying. In the aftermath of the foiled plot in early August 2006, virtually all cabin baggage was banned on flights, with the exception of passports and wallets.

Rules eased later in the month but the ban on liquids remained until November. Once permitted on board again, liquids were restricted to 100ml and all had to fit into a clear plastic bag measuring no more than 20cm by 20cm.

Many thought the rules would ease further but they remain strict. Tablets, laptops and cameras must be removed from cabin bags when passing through security.

Passengers faffing around removing items from their bags is one of the biggest causes of delays at security. But all this is set to change. It means the era of miniature toiletries might be behind us.

First para-astronaut joins the space race

Three Britons beat thousands of applicants to earn a chance to travel to the stars, **Kaya Burgess** reports

Britain has its first new astronauts in more than a decade after a former Paralympian from Surrey, an astrophysicist from Northern Ireland and a chemist from Kent were chosen from among 22,000 applicants by the European Space Agency.

John McFall, 41, from Frimley, is a former sprinter who took bronze in the 100m at the 2008 summer Paralympics. He has been named as the world's first "para-astronaut" and will take part in a feasibility study to assess the challenges of sending someone with a physical disability into space.

His right leg was amputated above the knee after a motorcycle accident in 2000 when he was 19. He is married with three children, has a degree in medicine and, having worked as a foundation doctor in the NHS from 2014 to 2016, is studying for his surgeon's exams. "With my broad scientific background and vast range of experiences, I felt compelled to try and help ESA [the European Space Agency] answer this question: can we get someone with a physical disability to do meaningful work in space?" he said. "I can bring inspiration — that science is for everyone [and that] potentially space is for everyone."

Rosemary Coogan, who was born in Northern Ireland, has become Britain's first full-time "career astronaut" since Tim Peake was announced in 2009, and she could be among the first European astronauts to walk on the moon.

Coogan, 31, is the eighth British-born astronaut, but only the third to work under a British flag after Peake and Helen Sharman, who became the country's first astronaut in 1989. She will be one of five new full-time European astronauts, alongside colleagues from France, Spain, Switzerland and Belgium.

Coogan studied physics and astronomy at Durham University and received a PhD from the University of Sussex after spending time as a Royal Navy reservist during her studies. She works at the National Centre for Space Studies in Paris. "Space has always fascinated me," she said. "My current job is actually to look at how galaxies grow and evolve with time, but I applied to the space programme because I wanted to get hands-on with contributing and learning the most we can from space.

"I'm really excited to do that by going to space, hopefully inspiring others to do the same. I don't know if I'll be going to the International Space Station or going to the moon, or helping plan activities for astronauts … it's just a case of seeing what's needed and when.

"In terms of going to the moon it really excites me, I feel as though it's almost stepping back in time in a way, to be on this rocky body that represents how the solar system was formed."

Coogan will start training in April. She said after her selection: "It feels as though we've been tested on everything imaginable, from physics and maths skills to memory, psychology, interaction with others, medical, enthusiasm." She added: "My family and my partner have been incredibly supportive. Without their understanding, their flexibility, their support … we wouldn't really be able to get to the stage we are today. It's a huge part of it."

Meganne Christian, 34, who was born in Kent to parents from New Zealand, will be in the "astronaut reserve" pool of people who will remain in their day jobs but could be called on for future missions.

She has a PhD in industrial chemistry from the University of New South Wales in Australia, where she moved when she was five. She has British, Italian, Australian and New Zealand citizenship and has worked in Antarctica.

Asked if she would like to do science on the moon, Christian said: "That is a very easy question to answer: absolutely, yes."

It is likely to take several years of training before Coogan, McFall or Christian make their first space flight. It took Peake six years before his first one in 2015.

There were 2,000 British candidates among the 22,000 who applied, with applicants asked to have at least a master's degree in natural sciences, medicine, engineering, mathematics or computer sciences, or a qualification as an experimental test pilot.

Applications were submitted last year, before a six-step selection process involving screening, psychological, practical and psychometric testing and two rounds of interviews.

Their training will begin in Cologne and will involve underwater training, learning how to deal with weightlessness, operating robotic arms and lessons in physics.

Peake said it was "really exciting for the UK" to have new astronauts.

Paul Bate, chief executive of the UK Space Agency, said: "The UK is playing a leading role in space exploration … Space has an incredible power to inspire and I am sure Rosemary, John and Meganne will become heroes for many young people and inspire them to shoot for the stars."

George Freeman, the science and space minister, said: "Tim Peake's Principia mission showed us all how space has the power to inspire millions across the country, showcasing the UK's role as a space science superpower. Today's announcement is a sign of international respect for … the UK's commitment to space for all."

● The mission to send the British-built Rosalind Franklin rover to Mars is back on after the ESA rescued the project. The craft was due to fly on a Russian rocket but links with Russia's space sector were severed after the invasion of Ukraine, leaving the mission in limbo. With £309 million from the ESA, the launch will now go ahead in 2028.

BENOIT TESSIER/REUTERS





Meganne Christian, John McFall and Rosemary Coogan are on course to be astronauts. McFall was a sprinter, left

Peake volunteers for mission to the moon



Tim Peake has got his "hand up" to be the first Briton to fly to the moon, with a real possibility of the UK getting a seat on a lunar mission (Kaya Burgess writes).

The European Space Agency has three seats for future Artemis moon missions, with two for a trip to the planned Gateway lunar space station and "potentially one for a landing mission", Peake, above, has told The Times. "Me and all of my classmates — I can absolutely guarantee you have got our hands up for one of those missions."

The first would likely come too soon, as early as 2027, for the new class of astronauts announced yesterday to be ready, making Peake, 50, and his six classmates from 2009 prime candidates. In 2015 Peake became only the second Briton to fly to space under a British flag. He has pledged to take Britain's three newest astronauts "under his wing" as they embark on a "wonderful but daunting" adventure.

He advised them: "Enjoy every step. Take a deep breath because there's an awful lot of uncertainty in this journey … [but] you'll have so much fun."



CHRIS KNIGHT/CATERS NEWS



Jump jockey Kat Pickering, a stunt rider, honing her skills at Ham House Stables in southwest London, where she teaches sidesaddle riding and classical dressage

Plea to blur line between doctors and nurses amid NHS staff crisis

Chris Smyth Whitehall Editor

The NHS staffing crisis will be solved only if doctors and nurses get more flexible about their job descriptions and break down barriers between roles, according to Rishi Sunak's health adviser.

Bill Morgan argues that training times for doctors and nurses may have to be reduced, and suggests developing "sub-consultants" and entirely new medical professions, He wants ministers to create an Office for Budget Responsibility-style body to predict future workforce needs.

The Treasury has held down the numbers of doctors and nurses Britain trains to prevent "supply-induced demand", which encourages people to seek appointments that are not needed, Morgan argues.

Chronic shortages of qualified staff are the biggest problem facing the health service, which has more than 130,000 vacancies. Morgan acknowledges that this means "some of the government's key manifesto commitments will not be met", citing the promise of 6,000 extra GPs.

Sunak said this week that the government was "thinking creatively about what new roles and capabilities we need in the healthcare workforce of the future". He urged the NHS to shed "conventional wisdom".

In a paper written before he entered No 10 but published today, Morgan argues that it is difficult practically and politically to ensure the NHS has enough staff and that the problem is unlikely to be fixed quickly. "If solving the NHS's workforce shortages was easy, it would have been done by now," he writes in a paper for the King's Fund and Engage Britain think tanks.

"Given that politicians want to recruit more staff, that it seems to make financial sense to do so and that people are willing to be trained, it would appear irrational for the NHS to ever experience staff shortages — and yet it almost always does."

Technology, laws and working practices are likely to change significantly in the decade or more it takes to train a doctor, making predicting exact numbers hard, Morgan says. The Treasury "understandably" does not want to waste money on paying for too many staff and fears the NHS would find unnecessary jobs for them.

In last week's autumn statement, Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, said the NHS would be able to publish workforce forecasts for the next five, ten and 15 years, something the Treasury has previously resisted.

Morgan argues this transparency is crucial to ending shortages, saying it would allow a proper public debate about workforce numbers. He calls for an independent body to oversee workforce projections, saying this could advise ministers and even take independent decisions on how many staff to train. He accepts politicians cannot push such changes for fear of watering down patient safety, and urges the medical profession to do so instead.

Professor Dame Helen Stokes-Lampard, chairwoman of the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges, said: 'There are statements in the report which some in the NHS might disagree with, but it is hard to argue with the central prescription for an effective workforce planning system."

● GP practices that do not provide patients with face-to-face appointments will be named in a league table of surgeries in England to be published today. It will show those offering the fewest in-person appointments, revealing how many appointments each practice is making, the length of time it takes to be seen and the proportion that are face-to-face. The statistics, on the NHS Digital website, are intended to help patients to make "informed choices" about their GP practice.

Targets for A&E 'ditched' as ministers try to ease the strain

Kat Lay Health Editor

NHS targets on cancer treatment, accident and emergency waiting times and ambulance responses are under review as the government seeks to simplify performance measures.

Lord Markham, a health minister, told peers that only a target for patients in non-urgent cases to be seen by a specialist within 18 weeks was certain to remain. A long-planned review of A&E standards is thought unlikely to happen.

Steve Barclay, the health secretary, has promised fewer targets, and Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, is said to favour dropping all but a handful of national performance measures.

At least 85 per cent of cancer patients are supposed to start treatment within 62 days, but the target has not been met since January 2016. Minesh Patel, head of policy at Macmillan Cancer Support, said that the latest waiting times for cancer treatment were among the highest on record. He added that without targets "there is a real danger that we lose accountability for performance and see treatment delays spiral out of control even further, which could impact people's chances of survival".

The Health Service Journal reported last night that new targets for A&E had been "effectively ditched" by ministers, who are said to favour the simplicity of the existing measure, that 95 per cent of patients should be admitted, treated or discharged within four hours of arrival.

The goals would have included a promise for patients to be seen by a nurse or doctor within 15 minutes of arriving at an A&E department. NHS England had described the measures as "more sophisticated and patient-centred". Last night it said conversations with the government were still in progress.

The Department of Health and Social Care said that its focus was on improving access to emergency care. "The NHS will publish a full recovery plan, including interim milestones, in the new year," it said, adding that this would be backed by an extra £6.6 billion for the NHS during the next two years.

NHS should not have to bear cost of gambling, leading article, page 33

Quintagram® No 1481

Solve all five clues using each letter underneath once only

1 Saint celebrated on April 23 (6)

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2 Floor of a building (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

3 Able ---, naval rank (6)

_ _ _ _ _ _

4 Building for milking cows (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

5 Arms store (7)

_ _ _ _ _ _ _

A	A	A	A	A	E	E	E
E	E	G	G	L	L	M	N
N	O	O	O	P	R	R	R
R	R	S	S	S	T	U	Y

Solutions MindGames in Times2
Cryptic clues see Times2, page 10

Fire suspect still held

Detectives continued to question a 31-year-old man over a fire in Clifton, Nottingham, that killed Fatoumatta Hydara, 28, and her two daughters, Fatimah Drammeh, three, and Naeemah Drammeh, one. Aboubacarr Drammeh, 40, her husband, described their deaths as a "cruel crime against my family". Inspector Karl Thomas, of Nottinghamshire police, said 40 detectives, including officers from neighbouring forces, were working on the murder inquiry.

Weather warning

The Met Office has warned of torrential rain and gale-force winds across Britain. Gusts of 70mph are expected on the coast and 50mph inland, with 20mm of rain possible. The recent deluge has led to Thames Water, which supplies 15 million people, to lift the hosepipe ban it imposed in the summer.

Full forecast, page 64

£10m gift for gallery

The first floor of the National Portrait Gallery, with its nine galleries of portraits of British history from 1840 to 1945, is to be renamed the Blavatnik Wing after a £10 million gift by Sir Leonard Blavatnik. The Ukrainian-born industrialist, who has UK-US citizenship, has also sponsored parts of Tate Modern and the Imperial War Museum.

Film actress defrauded

A *Love Actually* actress dressed in dead people's clothes after a friend stole £65,000 in savings, Cardiff crown court heard. Meg Wynn Owen, 83, had given Brian Malam, 60, a costume designer, power of attorney but he sent money to himself between 2015 and 2019, not her care home. He pleaded guilty to fraud and was jailed for two years, eight months.

Mouldy flat penalty

The housing association that allowed Awaab Ishak, two, to die from hazardous mould in his flat is to be stripped of government funds for new homes. Michael Gove, the housing secretary, said Rochdale Boroughwide Housing had failed its tenants and he was withdrawing £1 million that was due to be paid under the the affordable homes programme.

Phone fraud factory taken out by police

Fiona Hamilton
Crime and Security Editor
Charlie Parker

An online fraud factory that enabled criminals to fleece tens of thousands of victims out of millions of pounds has been broken up in a police cybercrime operation.

Detectives are contacting 70,000 potential victims in Britain after spoofing technology, provided to fraudsters who paid subscriptions to an illegal website, helped them to steal at least £48 million.

The international scam was allegedly masterminded by a 34-year-old man living in a luxury waterfront flat in Docklands, east London.

At one point as many as 20 people a minute were being targeted by callers using the site's technology, which enabled them to masquerade as callers from legitimate banks and steal money.

Teejai Fletcher, who is accused of being the site's administrator and who is alleged to have links to organised crime, has been charged with fraud.

Detectives, who said that Fletcher was living a "lavish lifestyle", seized a Lamborghini, Range Rover and Rolex watches during his arrest.

Hundreds of other alleged users of the technology in London and elsewhere in Britain have also been arrested.

Sir Mark Rowley, the Metropolitan Police commissioner, said the sting showed that the force was "reinventing" the way it investigated fraud. "The Met is targeting the criminals at the centre of these illicit webs that cause misery to thousands," he added.

The site iSpoof, which was advertised on channels on the encrypted app Telegram, was created in December 2020 and at its peak had 59,000 users.

They were allowed a free trial before they paid subscriptions of between £150 and £5,000 a month for its criminal software.

They posed as representatives of banks including Barclays, First Direct, Halifax, HSBC, Lloyds, Nationwide, NatWest, Santander and TSB.

The site's technology made it look as if fraudulent calls were coming from the banks concerned.

One victim was fleeced of £3 million. The average loss of £10,000 reported to Action Fraud, the national reporting centre, by 4,785 people is thought to be the tip of the iceberg.

Detectives believe that there are tens of thousands more victims and millions of pounds more is likely to have been defrauded.

Detective Superintendent Helen Rance said that iSpoof was one of the most prolific fraud websites in operation and had earned £3.2 million in subscriptions.

Of ten million fraudulent calls made using its technology 40 per cent were in the United States, 35 per cent were in Britain and the rest spread across other countries.

The Met has said it will text potential victims today and tomorrow and ask them to visit its website for more information and to report any fraud losses online.

Detectives worked with Dutch law enforcement officers, who tapped the website's servers in the Netherlands to secretly listen to phone calls and collect evidence. It emerged that criminals could also buy a service that sent out automated voice scripts to targets, purporting to be from their bank, to try to get personal details.

Rance acknowledged that other criminal websites would pop up and try to supply similar technology to fraudsters, but said that the Met's operation sent the message that the police were on to would-be criminals and they would not stay anonymous.

Rance, who leads on cybercrime for the Met, said: "Our message to criminals who have used this website is we have your details and are working hard to locate you, regardless of where you are."

She said fraudsters worked at their impersonation skills to trick victims into thinking they were being called by legitimate bank representatives.

There was an element of "social engineering" as they used information from elsewhere to build on their fraud. Often they had bought stolen bank records in other places on the dark web and so they knew personal details and even the nature of some transactions, which made their approach seem more legitimate.

Last night Fletcher's neighbours said they were surprised at his arrest. He lived in a ninth-floor flat overlooking Royal Victoria Dock, and which has a residents' gym and a 24-hour concierge service.

Fletcher has been charged with making or supplying articles for fraud, proceeds-of-crime matters and participating in the activities of an organised crime group. He is due to appear at Southwark crown court next month.

Behind the story

As frauds go, it would be difficult to find a more convincing one (Fiona Hamilton writes).

Targets were called by criminals purporting to be from banks and their phone numbers flashed up as coming from those institutions. In many cases, the fraudsters had already bought hacked bank details or other personal information, data that helped to make them appear legitimate. When they claimed to be investigating unexplained activity in a bank account and needed a pin number, many victims were taken in.

Detectives acknowledge that iSpoof was just one of many websites selling such software, but this operation could prove to be a watershed. Instead of waiting for victims to call Action Fraud, where reports are farmed out to individual forces and treated in isolation, detectives pursued a particular website, identifying the alleged mastermind and accomplices, before bringing down the servers.

More forces will need to adopt this approach if they are to clamp down on Britain's most common type of crime.



DARLENE HAMMOND/HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



Elizabeth Taylor clutching her 1961 best actress Oscar; with Anne Sanz, the friend who was given the Rio dress and a crocodile case; and telegrams that prove their authenticity





Taylor's Oscar dress discovered

Elizabeth Taylor was at the pinnacle of her stardom when she breathily thanked the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for awarding her the Oscar for best actress in 1961 (Jack Malvern writes).

The dress she wore that night is regarded as one of the crown jewels of fashion, and Christian Dior was proud to have it in its archive in Paris.

But a recent discovery suggests Dior was mistaken. The actress's dress has instead spent 51 years in London in the suitcase of a former aide.

Taylor had kept it unworn before giving it to the wife of her bodyguard in 1971. Anne Sanz, whose husband, Gaston, was an aide to Taylor and Richard Burton when they were married, has passed it to her family, who are selling it at auction on December 6.

The "Soirée à Rio" dress, designed by Marc Bohan for Christian Dior, is being sold with an estimate of £60,000, although this may prove conservative.

Kerry Taylor, the founder of Kerry Taylor Auctions, is selling the dress in her Passion for Fashion and Ballet auction. She said she was startled to find the dress because she believed it was in Paris.

She said: "I paid a visit to Anne Sanz and her family. I said it should 'comfortably be worth 40 to 60'.

"They looked a bit disappointed and said, '£40 to £60?' I said, 'No. £40,000 to £60,000."

Sanz, whom the actress entrusted with handling her clothes when she moved between her homes in London and Gstaad in Switzerland, said the star kept the dress because it was a "lucky charm".

Taylor had been nominated for Oscars in 1959 and 1960 without winning and was prepared to be passed over again in 1961, when she was in the running for *Butterfield 8*.

Her shock at winning came across in her speech. "I don't really know how to express my gratitude," she said, faltering. "I guess all I can say is thank you. Thank you with all my heart."

Sanz said Taylor eventually had a clearout of her clothes and said she could take whatever she wanted. She filled two large suitcases, one of which is also in the auction, with gowns and a vintage crocodile dressing case with silver fittings.

The 11 other items include Tiziani haute couture by Karl Lagerfeld and a black widow robe also designed by Lagerfeld that Taylor wore in her 1968 film *Boom!*

Kerry Taylor said there was "no doubt" the dresses were genuine: "If you look at all the documentation I think we can be sure that this one was Elizabeth Taylor's."

Dior did not comment.

Claim of oppression is absurd,

David McCann

Supreme Court judges have rejected the SNP's "absurd claim" that Scotland is an "oppressed colony" being subjected to British rule against its will.

Lord Reed of Allermuir, the court's Scottish president, dismissed the notion that Scotland was comparable to Kosovo as the SNP's submission tried to invoke international rights to self-determination. In a 35-page judgment yesterday, a panel of five Supreme Court judges dismissed the claim that Holyrood could legally hold its own "advisory" referendum.

The panel ruled that "a lawful referendum" on independence would "be an important political event, even if its outcome had no immediate legal consequences and even if the United Kingdom government had not given any political commitment to act upon it".

Nicola Sturgeon, the first minister, vowed to continue pushing for independence by pursuing a "de facto" referendum in the next general election.

Rishi Sunak, the prime minister, welcomed the "clear and definitive" ruling. A Downing Street spokesman said Sunak would "look to" avoid another independence referendum. Asked whether he could rule out another vote, his press secretary said there had been a "once-in-a-generation referendum not too long ago and that result should be respected".

The SNP had argued that limitations on the powers of the Scottish parliament in the Scotland Act should be "restrictively interpreted in a way which is compatible with that right under international law". It cited rulings in the Canadian Supreme Court and the International Court of Justice.

Reed said in his summary that the court in the Canadian case, concerning Quebec, held that the right to self-determination under international law existed only in situations "of former colonies or where a people is oppressed". He said: "The court found that Quebec did not meet the threshold of a colonial people or an oppressed people. The same is true of Scotland and the people of Scotland."

He said the UK government's submissions to the international court that concerned Kosovo were "consistent" with the Canadian case in that they had argued the right to self-determination was "normally limited to situations of a colonial type". Reed concluded: "That is not the position in Scotland."

Donald Cameron, constitution spokesman for the Scottish Tories, said: "The nationalists' attempt to draw parallels between Scotland and Kosovo was crass, tasteless and offensive."

The court rejected an argument made by the Dorothy Bain KC, Lord Advocate for Scotland, that the result of a potential independence vote would not have a legal effect on the Union.

The SNP accused Westminster of "denying democracy". Sturgeon said the Scottish government would find a way to hold a vote. "I refuse to give up on the basic principle of democracy," she said. "We should be in no doubt, as of today democracy is what is at stake."

Ross Greer, the Scottish Green MSP, said: "Every vote cast for pro-independence candidates at the 2024 general election will count towards that mandate for Scotland's independence."

Angus Robertson, the Scottish constitution secretary, said the court ruling signalled the "end of the Union as we know it".

Alister Jack, the Scotland secretary, accused the SNP of making "misleading" claims that it had an electoral mandate for another referendum.

Independence day, letters, page 32
Doomed bid, leading article, page 33

Analysis

Nicola Sturgeon has turned Scotland's big constitutional question into a game of chicken after the Supreme Court ruled that she could not hold a unilateral referendum on independence (Kieran Andrews writes).

Rishi Sunak, as with his predecessors in No 10, has refused to agree to hold another vote and she has been left with little room for manoeuvre after the judgment from the highest court in the land. Using the next general election as a de facto referendum appears to be a last throw of the dice from a first minister.

It's better, the nationalist thought process goes, to go down swinging than meekly accept the ruling.

Yet there are a myriad of potential pitfalls with the new plan, which Sturgeon herself concedes is imperfect. Does the Scottish public agree that a general election to decide the next UK government, held in the middle of an economic crisis, is the time to focus solely on the constitution?

Is instability what the electorate will seek after they have endured the chaos that followed the 2016 UK vote to leave the EU (albeit where Scotland voted strongly to Remain, a key nationalist argument for another independence referendum)? Sturgeon countered yesterday that the present recession, with inflation, mortgages and energy prices all rising fast, is the perfect reason for Scotland to leave the rest of the UK behind.

But unlike recent times, there is another danger on the horizon for Sturgeon's Scottish National Party: a Labour Party that is not only largely managing to avoid defenestrating itself but which looks increasingly credible both north and south of the border.

The argument that the best result from the general election for centre-left voters fed up with the Conservatives in government is to back Sir Keir Starmer to be prime minister may be persuasive in areas of Scotland's central belt.

The SNP is still most likely to win the majority of seats in Scotland, but a genuine Labour challenge is something that has not been present for a decade.

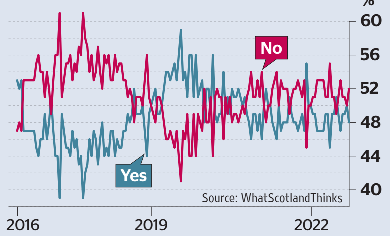
If the SNP does not win 50 per cent of the vote, then it has lost the de facto referendum Sturgeon has called. Recent precedent suggests that means she has to resign and a whole era of Scottish nationalism comes crashing down.

Those are the pitfalls. But what happens if Sturgeon's gamble pays off and the magic number is achieved, with most Scots backing the SNP?

Unionist politicians, both Tory and Labour, are reluctant to be dragged into a hypothetical scenario. They say it will not happen and it is not for them to outline ways to break up the Union. That's fine, unless the situation is no longer hypothetical. Can either party in the UK entirely reject more than half of Scottish voters and expect to pick up seats in the future? That would be a gamble at least on a par with Sturgeon's.

Constitutional question

How would you vote in a Scottish independence referendum if held now?



Court applied three tests

The UK's most senior judges were not asked to settle a traditional dispute in their ruling on whether the Scottish government could conduct a unilateral independence referendum (Jonathan Ames writes).

Instead, the five-strong panel of the Supreme Court, led by its president, Lord Reed of Allermuir, a Scotsman, were asked to determine what many will see as a relatively narrow but crucial point of law.

Dorothy Bain KC, who as Lord Advocate is the most senior legal adviser to the Scottish government, asked the court whether a proposed bill setting out the parameters of a referendum would be "outside the legislative competence" of Holyrood.

As the court said, the matter was "a legal question" about the Scottish parliament's power to make legislation under the Scotland Act 1998. The judges were not being asked, and nor could they be asked, "to give a view on the distinct political question of whether Scotland should become independent from the rest of the United Kingdom". As a result, the court considered three points. It found first that the lord advocate's question was, indeed, a "devolution issue". Second, it found that the court should rule on it even though the judges could have used their discretion to decline to do so.

And, third, the court answered the question by ruling that the provisions in the proposed bill related to matters reserved to the UK parliament in Westminster and as such the Scottish parliament could not legislate for an independence vote.



Nicola Sturgeon, Scotland's first minister, said democracy was at stake after her

Quentin Letts

Sunak looking Blairish on bleating Blackford's big day

Political Sketch



The order paper was infested with Scots Nats. For PMQs, six of the 14 listed questions, which are drawn from a hat every week, were from our Pictish warriors. Their chieftain, Ian Blackford, a crofter so humble that he knits his own swimming trunks, also had the usual two questions allocated to the third-party leader. We even had the moderator of the Church of Scotland in an upstairs gallery. They were everywhere. A swarm of moths!

Most uncharacteristically, the Nats brimmed with disgruntlement. Two hours earlier the Supreme Court had ruled that Edinburgh's parliament could not legally organise a second referendum on independence. This caused tremendous agitation. As the noon start of PMQs neared, the Scottish benches filled with purpling faces. Steam whooshed out of ear-holes and nostrils. Elbows flapped, necks tweaked and jowls were inflated by indignation. If you have ever seen a barn of angry capercaillies, you will have the picture.

Blackford hurled himself at the prime minister. "The very idea that the United Kingdom is a voluntary

justices tell Scots

JANE BARLOW/PA



government's application for an "advisory" independence referendum was dismissed by five Supreme Court judges

union is now dead and burrried," he cried. "Aye! Aye! Aye!" clucked two-score voices behind him. Allan Dorans (SNP, Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock) claimed that Scots were "shackled and imprisoned" in the British state. Chris Law (SNP, Dundee West), a big lad with custard shoes, three-piece suit and a Hell's Angel's ponytail, stepped towards the middle of the floor to take the fight to the English. How could the Supreme Court's ruling be compatible with "democracy"? Fists clenched. A honking and hawing rent the air.

Still they came: Philippa Whitford (Central Ayrshire) demanding that Scots be given "a say in their future"; Amy Callaghan (East Dunbartonshire) thrice whipping shouts of "nooooo!" from her colleagues as she described the suffering of her land; Angus MacNeil (Western Isles) demanding more money from London; Kirsten Oswald (East Renfrewshire) asserting "we are the people!"

Rishi Sunak, who had the Scotland secretary, Alister Jack, murmuring advice into his left ear, kept completely calm and spoke about his desire to work positively with Edinburgh's leaders and to continue spending billions of Great British pounds north of Gretna Green. This made the Nats only crosser. They didn't want Sunak's money! No, hang on, they did! But those billions weren't enough! The PM had a successful day. While smooth and reasonable with the SNP, he was markedly more aggressive with Sir Keir Starmer.

The Labour leader, having opened with some pieties about the football World Cup, went in on the economy. That might sound fruitful territory until you bear in mind that Starmer is hopeless on financial matters. Sunak knows that and he monstered him. In the flicks of wrist and elbow, his sideways stance and the crispness of attack, there was something markedly Blairish in this Sunak. Starmer, mocked for being an opportunistic bluffer, tried laughing. Sunak was on it in a flash. "There's no substance because there's no plan," he jabbed. This drew cheers from the bedraggled Tories. The session will probably soon be forgotten. Few episodes of PMQs are important. But watching this Sunak, and a suddenly rather grey, podgy Starmer, a worm of doubt formed. Received wisdom says Labour has the next general election in the bag. Might the bag have a tear?

Immediately after PMQs there was an explosion when Speaker Hoyle admonished another SNP man, John Nicolson (Ochil & South Perthshire), for releasing on Twitter a "partial and biased" version of a letter Hoyle had sent him. V bad form, that sort of thing. One of the many endearing things about this Speaker is that when he loses his temper he struggles to breathe, his spectacles slide down his nose, his snout twitches and he starts ab-dab-dabbing like Ronnie Barker's shopkeeper in *Open All Hours*. His eruption was heard with pleasure. Nothing political in that. Nicolson is a histrionic, self-pitying stirrer and is little liked.

Charles's lawyer will lead Raab bullying inquiry

Henry Zeffman Associate Political Editor
Oliver Wright Policy Editor

A barrister who previously defended Prince Charles will determine whether Dominic Raab bullied civil servants, with multiple officials expected to be interviewed about the behaviour of the deputy prime minister and justice secretary.

Adam Tolley KC will hold an inquiry into Raab's conduct after formal complaints were made relating both to his first stint at the Ministry of Justice, from September last year to September this year, and to his time as foreign secretary between July 2019 and September 2021. Tolley will initially investigate the two formal complaints and "establish the facts of the cases".

Downing Street said he would have the freedom to widen his investigation to take in other claims and committed itself to publishing his report in full.

The justice department complaint was signed not from an individual civil servant but by a team of mid-ranking policy officials, all of whom Tolley is expected to seek to interview.

The complaint was submitted initially in March this year and was resubmitted last week to make clear that it constituted a formal complaint against Raab, after the government had asserted that no formal complaints had been made against him. It accused him of presiding over a "perverse culture of fear" at the department.

Last night about a dozen senior civil servants, including private secretaries from several government departments, were understood to be preparing formal complaints against Raab. It was described by BBC *Newsnight* as a co-ordinated effort. It was also reported that officials at two departments in which Raab had worked had raised concerns over his alleged use of private email to conduct government business. Suella Braverman, the home secretary, resigned from the role in Liz Truss's government over security concerns from her use of private email.

Raab was appointed to his two present cabinet roles by Rishi Sunak at the end of last month. It will be up to the prime minister to determine what, if any, sanction should be imposed if Tolley finds fault with his conduct.

The ministerial code, against which Raab will be judged, states that ministers should "treat all those with whom they come into contact with consideration and respect". It adds: "Working relationships, including with civil servants, ministerial and parliamentary colleagues and parliamentary staff should be proper and appropriate.

"Harassing, bullying or other inappropriate or discriminating behaviour wherever it takes place is not consistent with the ministerial code."

Raab has said he will "thoroughly rebut and refute" the claims and that he was "confident that I have behaved professionally throughout".

Sunak has been forced to turn to Tolley, who will be paid by the Cabinet Office for the work, because he has not yet found someone prepared to take on the role of his adviser on ministerial interests. The Times understands that several people have been approached but so far no one has accepted the role.

Tolley acted for King Charles, then Prince of Wales, in the successful defence of tribunal proceedings alleging race and sex discrimination. Elaine Day, who had worked at Clarence House for five years, said she had been hounded out of her job, claiming that anyone who "didn't know their place" risked victimisation. The tribunal ruled in 2005 that she had quit and her claims were made in retaliation for concerns raised about her work by senior staff.



Adam Tolley KC will interview several civil servants about the claims

Campaign to cut energy use

Continued from page 1

a "national mission" if they cut their energy use.

Ministers have been presented with three options for a public campaign: scaling up existing messaging with a mainly digital campaign at a cost of £5 million; a limited range of broadcast adverts led by ministers; and a "full-scale" campaign led by ministers and celebrities. The Times has been told that the full-scale campaign is the most likely, although no decision has been taken.

Under a fourth "crisis" option, people would be sent direct text messages along with frequent public appeals urging a cut in energy usage. This would be enacted only if there were energy shortages this winter, which ministers believe to be highly unlikely.

A recent analysis by the Social Market Foundation think tank found that a 20 per cent reduction in gas consumption would save households an average of £261 and the government £6.2 billion. Hunt said ministers would end all universal energy support in the spring of 2024, even if energy bills remained high. "In the long run, we're going need everyone to help us crack this problem if we're not going to have a huge additional burden on taxpayers," he said.

Typical savings

- Turning off heating when leaving home **£105**
- Turning off radiators in empty rooms **£105**
- Reducing boiler temperature **£80**
- Turning off appliances at the mains **£55**
- Reducing washing machine temperature **£35**
- Turning off lights when not needed **£25**
- Taking a shower instead of a bath once a week **£15**

Germany favoured quick Putin win in Ukraine, claims Johnson

Henry Zeffman
Associate Political Editor

France was in denial about Russia invading Ukraine while Germany favoured a quick victory for President Putin, Boris Johnson has claimed.

The former prime minister accused the EU powers of having initially adopted a "disastrous" approach to Russia's aggression.

In an interview in Lisbon, Johnson also failed to rule out a return to No 10 and said his greatest mistake as leader had been not spending enough time with his MPs. Johnson adapted a line from the comedians Morecambe and Wise to make a gentle criticism of Truss's mini-budget. "It's kind of like when I play the piano," he said. "The notes individually sound perfectly OK, but they're not in the right order or occurring at the right time. That might be my comment on some of the measures."

Johnson, talking about the early days of the war in Ukraine, told CNN Portugal: "This thing was a huge shock . . . we could see the Russian battalion tactical groups amassing, but different countries had very different perspectives. The German view was at one stage that if it were going to happen, which would be a disaster, then it would be better for the whole thing to be over quickly, and for Ukraine to fold.

"I couldn't support that. I thought that was a disastrous way of looking at it. But I can understand why they thought and felt as they did. Be in no doubt that the French were in denial right up until the last moment."

Steffen Hebestreit, a spokesman for the German government, said: "We know that the very entertaining former prime minister always has a unique relationship with the truth. This case is also no exception."

Johnson said that Italy, whose prime minister was then Mario Draghi, was "at one stage simply saying that they would be unable to support the position we were taking" because of their "massive" reliance on Russian energy.

But having altered its early approach "the EU has done brilliantly" in opposing Russia, Johnson said. "What happened was everybody — Germans, French, Italians, everybody, Joe Biden — saw that there was simply no option. Because you couldn't negotiate with this guy. That's the key point," he said. "I pay tribute to the way the EU has acted. They have been united. The sanctions were tough."

He said membership of the EU "would be a good thing for Ukraine", and "if Ukraine chooses to be a member of the EU, they should go for it".

Johnson credited President Zelensky with helping to stiffen Europe's resolve. "He's a very brave guy," he said. "I think the history of this conflict would have been totally, totally different if he hadn't been there."

Lights go out across Ukraine, page 34



South African leader gets down to business

After the pomp and ceremony of the first day of President Ramaphosa's state visit, it was business as usual yesterday for the South African leader as he held meetings with Rishi Sunak and Sir Keir Starmer (Valentine Low writes).

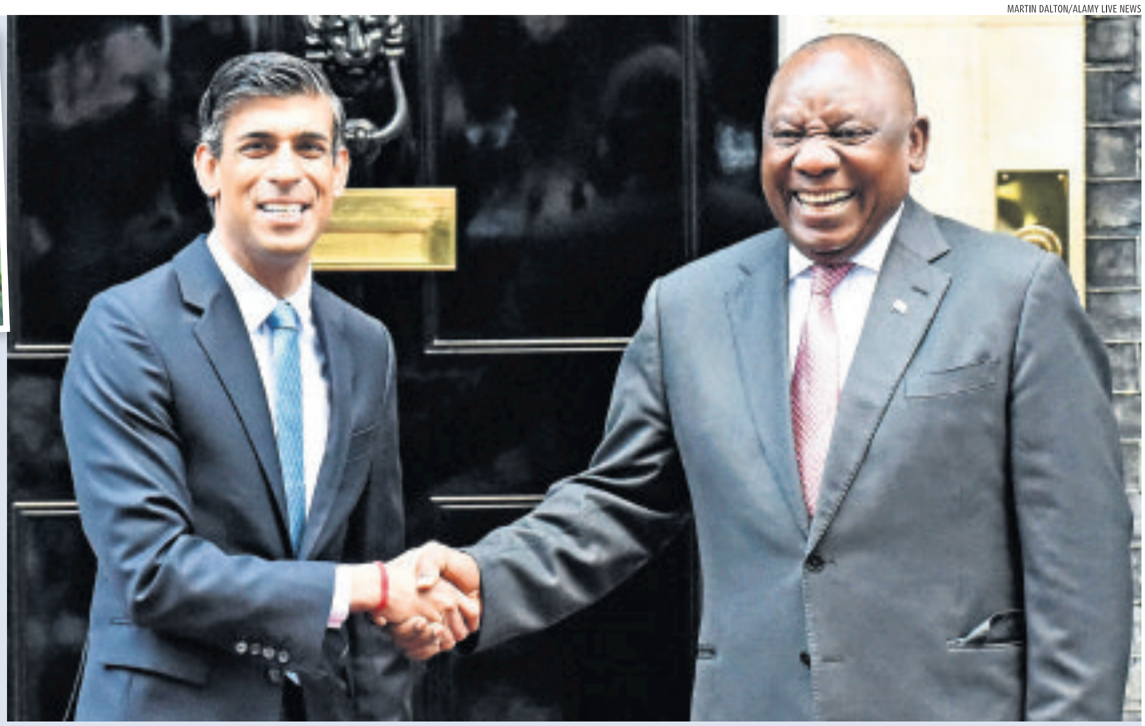
Meeting Sunak for a working lunch in No 10, Ramaphosa said he wanted to "deepen and broaden" links with Britain, which he described as "historic in many, many ways". Sunak said it was a "historic state visit" and that "South Africa and the UK are obviously very strong partners, allies, friends and we share so many of the same objectives — notably, transitioning to clean energy while creating jobs and opportunity for our citizens".

The pair discussed trade, with the aim of "bolstering co-operation on green hydrogen and sustainable infrastructure", as well as increasing exports and trade in services. The countries also have agreed to strengthen their partnership on healthcare to avoid future pandemics. This agreement was signed as Ramaphosa visited the Francis Crick Institute biomedical research facility in London.

As part of the deal, British and South African institutions will collaborate on nine research projects on issues including health systems, mental health, surgery and HIV, the Foreign Office said. The King said on a visit to St Bartholomew's Hospital in London yesterday that he had had a "terrific evening" hosting Ramaphosa at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday for the first state banquet of his reign.

Court circular, page 59

MARTIN DALTON/ALAMY LIVE NEWS



Rishi Sunak discussed clean energy yesterday with President Ramaphosa of South Africa, who also toured Kew Gardens with the Earl of Wessex, left

Braverman: Migrants to blame for Manston crisis

Matt Dathan Home Affairs Editor

The home secretary admitted that the government has lost control of the UK's borders as a row broke out among senior Tories over who is to blame for the crisis in accommodating migrants.

Suella Braverman insisted that she was not responsible for overcrowding last month at the Manston processing centre in Kent. She said it was the fault of migrants who exploited the "generosity of the British people".

Home Office sources blamed Priti Patel, accusing her of failing to book enough hotels when she was home secretary over the summer. She has threatened to take action against staff at the Home Office after claims that she had slowed down the hotel procurement process by requiring ministers to sign off bookings from mid-June. A source said: "Not booking or commissioning any new hotels for two months caused us huge problems. The knock-on effect was that we lost our buffer and couldn't transfer people out quickly enough in September."

Patel denied there was a change in the sign-off process.

Robert Jenrick, the immigration minister, blamed his predecessors in the Home Office in a row in the Commons. He said "insufficient accommodation was procured over a sustained period". Philip Hollobone, a Tory MP, called on him to resign for forcing migrants on local authorities without consulting with the area's MP or council.

Several councils have begun legal action against the government over its failure to consult them and local communities before moving migrants into hotels in their area. The Home Office is also facing five legal challenges over claims it detained migrants unlawfully at Manston. The centre is empty but at the end of last month it held more than 4,000 migrants, almost triple its capacity.

Asked repeatedly where the fault lies for the problems at Manston by MPs on the home affairs committee, Braverman said: "It's the people coming here illegally, people smugglers, people who are choosing to take an illegal and dangerous journey for economic reasons."

However, Braverman made an extraordinary admission that successive Conservative governments had failed to prevent people coming to the UK illegally over the past decade.

Responding to an accusation from Lee Anderson, a Conservative MP, that the Home Office was "not fit for purpose", she said: "We have failed to control our borders, yes. That's why the prime minister and myself are absolutely determined to fix this problem."



Suella Braverman also cited people smugglers

Housing for asylum seekers sucks £1bn from aid budget

Oliver Wright, Lara Spirit, Matt Dathan

More than a billion pounds of Britain's overseas aid budget was spent accommodating asylum seekers and refugees in the UK last year, the government has admitted.

Figures released by the Foreign Office reveal that almost 10 per cent of the UK's foreign aid spending was being allocated to the Home Office to fund costs such as the small boats crisis.

The increased domestic spending has resulted in millions of pounds being cut from other parts of the aid budget. Money for humanitarian support in Africa was reduced by almost £900 million. Charities described the cuts as a disaster, warning that they were "short-sighted and immoral".

Under controversial Treasury rules the government is allowed to count support for refugees and migrants in the UK as part of Britain's contribution to international development.

But the spiralling costs of dealing with the small boat crisis and the Afghan resettlement programme coincided with the decision to cut overseas development spending from 0.7 per cent of gross national income to 0.5 per cent. This has resulted in large cuts to the UK's aid programmes. Aid spending to Ethiopia has been reduced by more than half, and funding for Bangladesh by £116 million.

The huge rise in asylum costs has been driven by the practice of accommodating migrants in hotels, which began during the pandemic to prevent the spread of the virus but has remained. More than 40,000 migrants are living in hotels, at a cost of £6.8 million per day to taxpayers.

In his autumn statement the chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, ruled out any increase in the aid budget, saying it would be frozen at 0.5 per cent until the economy improved.

Sarah Champion, the chairwoman of the Commons international development committee, said that although it was important to support Afghan and Ukrainian refugees this should not come at the cost of cutting other budgets. "This money is vital and the government should be absolutely clear about that," she said.

Sex predator in comedy 'an open secret'

Sean O'Neill

A prominent male entertainer's reputation for sexual misconduct is an open secret in the entertainment industry, the comedian Katherine Ryan has claimed in a BBC interview.

Ryan, 39, said she had confronted the man several times during the recording of a comedy programme some years ago and told him he was a "sexual predator". The exchanges were not included when the programme was broadcast.

Asked last night on the BBC2 programme *Louis Theroux Interviews* what she meant by the term predator, Ryan said: "I mean a perpetrator of sexual assault but it is very dangerous for us to have this conversation.

"I'm happy to have it but it's a litigious minefield because lots of people have tried to nail this person down for their alleged crimes and this person has very good lawyers.

"So am I going to put my mortgage on the line by saying who this person is or entering into any conversations like that? We've seen what happens to the people who talk about alleged predators.

"It's not really my story to tell … no one has perpetrated any sexual assaults against me. But this person — I believe very strongly, so do a lot of people, it's an open secret — is a perpetrator of sexual assault. I, in front of loads of people in the format of the show, said to this person's face that they are a predator, again and again."

When Theroux, one of the few interviewers to ask Jimmy Savile about allegations against him, questioned if the claims about the unnamed man could be ill-founded, Ryan said they were "very credible".

Theroux spent three months with Savile in 2000 for a programme that raised the issue of the performer's sexual conduct and rumours that swirled around him. Theroux was criticised years later when Savile was exposed after his death as a predatory paedophile. He defended the original programme, saying it was "very far from soft journalism".

Theroux referenced Savile during his interview with Ryan but did not go any further towards identifying the man they were discussing. She added: "This is what we talk about — female comics and probably actresses and women in my industry — talk about all the time because that is the safest way for us to talk about it. I didn't tell any employer or blow a whistle or do anything at all. I handled it, for lack of a better term, like a man, and said it to his face."

The interview was the second time this year that Ryan, who is pregnant with her third child, has raised the subject. She said she had been criticised for not naming the individual.

She discussed the problem of predatory men in show business in June during her Amazon Prime show *Backstage With Katherine Ryan* during a talk with Sara Pascoe, a fellow comic. Ryan said she called the unnamed man a "predator to his face" in front of others every day while working on the show. She told Pascoe: "I've done a show with a person who I and you believe is a predator. What am I supposed to do? I've thought about that, but it's such a messy thing because I don't have proof.

"What, am I not supposed to feed my children because of someone else? I raised it. I called him a predator to his face and in front of everyone every day."

Ryan told The Times that discussing such behaviour in public was not "about cancelling anyone".

She said: "I believe that as a general rule, if you wish to get to the bottom of predatory behaviour rather than just sensationalising what women say, you should ask the men and stop asking us."


Katherine Ryan said the allegations about the performer were credible



Exeter at top of the tree for greenness

Its name may literally mean "dear green place", but Glasgow's city centre has been ranked as being the least lush in the country (Adam Vaughan writes).

Exeter, with its tree-lined streets and vegetation along the River Exe, was top of a study's league of green spaces and tree cover, which found a north-south divide in urban centres.

Researchers said the findings mattered because a growing body of scientific literature showed that access to green spaces was vital for health and wellbeing. They hope the results will spur councils to plant trees and establish parks.

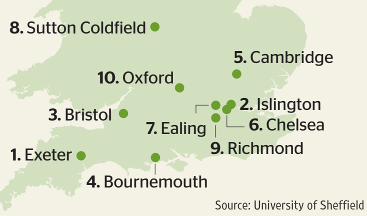
The study, led by a British and Australian team, is the first to rank urban centres based on indicators of green space. By combining maps of tree cover and publicly accessible gardens and parks with satellite images measuring the green pigment in plants, Jake Robinson, of the University of Sheffield, created a single measure of greenness for 68 urban centres with a population of more than 100,000.

The greenest five — Exeter, followed by Islington in north London, Bristol, Bournemouth and Cambridge — were all in the south. The least green were in the north, with Glasgow behind Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield and Middlesbrough.

"We suspected that would be the case because a lot of southern affluent cities invested in tree-lined streets in the 19th century. Plus there's a bit more urban sprawl in there due to urbanisation and industrialisation in the north," said Robinson, whose study is published in the journal Plos One.

Only 2 per cent of Glasgow's centre has tree cover, compared with about 12 per cent in Exeter. Greener areas also tended to be less deprived.

Britain's ten greenest urban centres



Source: University of Sheffield

Tree cover around the cathedral helped to lift Exeter to first place in a study that found a distinct north-south divide, with Glasgow judged the worst

TV presenter dropped over cancer

George Sandeman

A former presenter of the Channel 4 property show *A Place in The Sun* has said bosses dropped him after he told them he had cancer.

Jonnie Irwin, 49, a father of three, was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer in August 2020 when doctors discovered that it had spread to his brain. He was given six months to live but medication, radiotherapy and chemotherapy have kept him alive and allowed him to continue to work.

Irwin has filmed for another property programme, *Escape To The Country*, which is broadcast by the BBC, while having treatment and has worked on other commercial projects. However, Irwin said: "As soon as I told *A Place In The Sun* about my diagnosis they paid me for the rest of the season but didn't renew my contract. They knew I wanted to carry on." He told The Sun: "That hurt. That broke my heart. I feel hugely let down. I can't even watch the show now."

Irwin added: "I told them I wanted to work. When I said I can get you doctor notes and assurances from my oncologist that I am fit to work, I was told, verbatim, 'Oh, you really don't want to go down that route, do you?' They said, 'We don't think we can get the insurance', not 'We can't get the insurance' but 'We don't think . . .'. That broke my heart and affected my mental health. Within two weeks someone else was on TV doing my job. I just feel I earned a bit more from them after 18 years."

Irwin and his wife Jess, 40, have three sons: Rex, aged three, and twins Cormac and Rafa, aged two. He has paid off the mortgage on a new home in Newcastle so his wife can be close to her family. "I want to go knowing that Jess and the boys are looked after," he said.

A statement from Channel 4 and production company Freeform said: "No stone was left unturned in trying to enable Jonnie to continue his international filming with us during Covid but the production company were unable to secure adequate insurance cover for him.

"We, of course, understand how frustrating this must be for him at this incredibly difficult time."


Jonnie Irwin says he feels "hugely let down"

Blackface police officer who joked of groping keeps job

Keith Perry

A police inspector who posted photos of himself in blackface and joked on Facebook about groping a nursery worker has kept his job.

Inspector Paul Ayling, of Bedfordshire police, posted racially offensive images of himself at parties in 2010 and made misogynistic posts years later. The blackface photos were on his public profile for 12 years before a complaint was made by a member of the public.

Ayling, 39, also posted in 2016: "An accidental boob grab of a nursery nurse while dropping off your daughter is the way to start any day."

Mark Emsley, a father of three from Shefford, Bedfordshire, complained to Bedfordshire police in September last year. After an investigation, the force recommended Ayling's conduct be treated as practice requiring improvement, which falls short of misconduct.

Detective Chief Inspector Ben Martin of Cambridgeshire police, wrote to Emsley in January and said: "They [the posts] are distasteful … but I do not consider they are racist by their nature."

Ayling's case was referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in April and sent back to the force to investigate. An IOPC spokesman said: "Following careful consideration, we were satisfied that the force appeared to be treating the matter seriously and we decided that an independent investigation was not required."

‘Inexcusable’ Beckham is playing a blinder for Qatar

David Brown Doha, **Mario Ledwith**

David Beckham is playing a starring role in the World Cup as an ambassador for Qatar, meeting dignitaries and attending promotional events.

The former England captain, who is reported to be earning £150 million from his ten-year contract to promote the Gulf state’s international reputation, has been criticised by Human Rights Watch for his “inexcusable . . . silence” during the tournament.

While keeping a low profile with western media, which has highlighted Qatar’s human rights record, Beckham has made regular appearances in the country and attended games. His actions are a contrast to the German players, who covered their mouths before their match against Japan in protest at being blocked from wearing an anti-discrimination rainbow armband.

Beckham, 47, started his World Cup duties last week with a video address to the Generation Amazing youth festival in Doha — staged by the Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, which has organised the World Cup.

Beckham called the tournament a “platform for progress”. He told the audience: “You share Generation Amazing’s twin passions for the game of football and for making the world a more tolerant and inclusive place.”

Two days later he was the star guest at the opening of the British government’s Garden of Great pavilion on the Corniche in the centre of Doha. Beckham, promoted as ambassadorial president of the British Fashion Council, spoke along with the London designer Foday Dumbuya about “empowerment through creativity”.

He did not respond when asked: “Do you regret this whole partnership [with the Qataris]?”

Beckham, who is is understood to be staying at the Mandarin Oriental, one of Doha’s most exclusive hotels, was a star guest at Qatar’s game against Ecuador at the Al-Byat Stadium. He mixed with dignitaries such as the rulers of Dubai, Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

The next morning he filmed a promotional clip at a pitch in Doha with England fans, some of whom had been paid by the authorities to visit Qatar.

At England’s match against Iran, Beckham had a prime seat in a central position with leading dignitaries. After the match he walked down to join the England players’ families.

On Tuesday he met Kely Nascimento-DeLuca, the eldest daughter of Pelé, who wrote: “I got to chat with Posh’s husband. Really cool guy.”

Minky Worden, the Human Rights Watch director of global initiatives, said Beckham was taking part in sportswashing. “What’s really inexcusable is his silence since this World Cup has started, when there have been acts of violence, exclusion and discrimination against either LGBT people or allies.”

She added: “You can see how all of this kowtowing to Qatar’s horrific anti-gay laws, policies and practices is poisoning football. It’s poisoning this World Cup.”

The publisher of the gay men’s magazine Attitude, Darren Styles, said on Twitter this week that he had taken down its David Beckham cover of 2002 — the first time a Premier League footballer posed for a gay magazine — from the walls of its offices

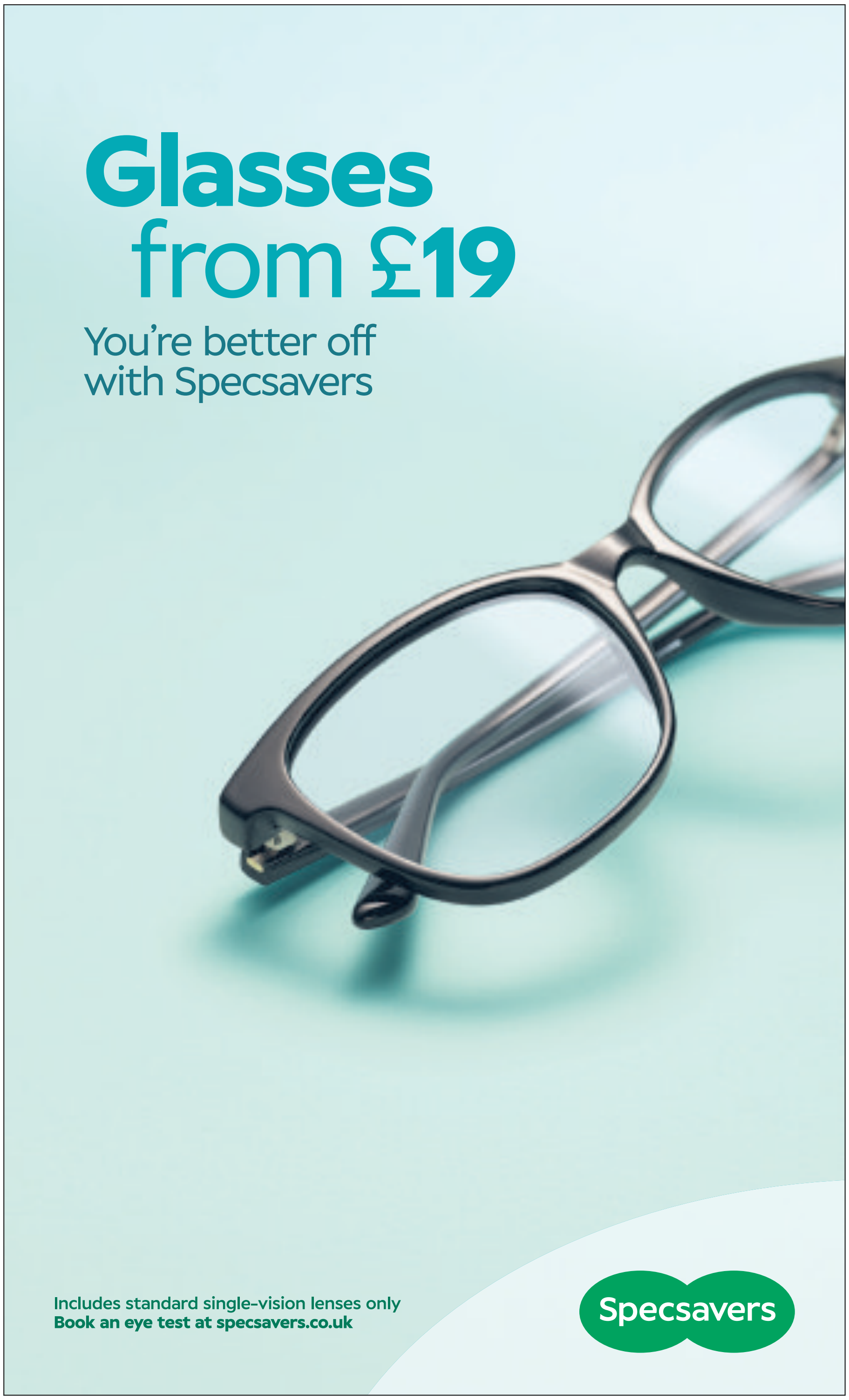
“For players, the pitch is their workplace, and it is not acceptable they (and fans and journalists) are directly faced with homophobia, harassment and discrimination in Qatar . . . and David Beckham is silent.”

The German football association, after the team’s protest, said: “Denying us the armband is the same as denying us a voice.” The German interior minister, Nancy Faeser, wore a One Love armband while watching the game against Japan in the stadium next to Gianni Infantino, the Fifa president.

Jakob Jensen, the Danish FA chief executive said the group of seven European nations including England and Wales who planned to wear the One Love armbands were looking into legal action against Fifa. The German FA claimed England was the victim of “extreme blackmail” by Fifa before announcing that Harry Kane would not wear the rainbow armband

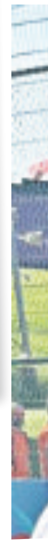
Beckham’s representatives were contacted for comment.

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David Beckham with England fans in Qatar, where he has also been rubbing shoulders with dignitaries including Kely Nascimento-DeLuca, Pelé’s eldest daughter. He is said to be staying at the exclusive Mandarin Oriental hotel





Police must

David Brown

Qatari police have been advised not to treat rape victims as adulterers or to target people carrying rainbow symbols.

Guidance from Fifa, the World Cup organiser, says police in the Islamic state should not prosecute fans deemed to be in inappropriate dress or drunk in public.

The advice comes after the case of a World Cup official who was warned she may have to marry her attacker to avoid prosecution.

“Participant and attendee behaviour offences”, a nine-page document, says police should be lenient “towards behaviours that do not threaten physical integrity or property”.

It emerged after Welsh and American fans said they had been forced to remove rainbow items before entering the stadium for their game on Monday. Fifa has banned team captains from wearing rainbow armbands that show support for the LGBT community.

However, Qatar’s Supreme Comm-



Young Londoner plotting England team's downfall

Paul Hirst Doha

Yunus Musah has a cockney accent; his father works for the NHS; and he has represented England at youth level in four age groups.

Scroll through his Instagram page and you will find pictures of him playing for England's youth teams with the caption "always an honour" and a few years ago Musah and his youth-team colleagues were given an address at St George's Park by Gareth Southgate.

"It was great to have the England manager speak to you," Musah, the former England under-18 captain, said. "I was thinking: 'I hope that one day I will be selected by him.'"

Tomorrow Musah, 19, will cross paths with Southgate again, but he will not be wearing an England shirt. Instead, he will be representing the United States.

Gregg Berhalter, the US coach, called Musah up to a training camp a couple of years ago and he has not looked back. The combative and energetic Valencia midfielder has 20 caps.

Musah's backstory is complicated. Not long after his birth in New York, his Ghanian parents moved to Italy, where their son started to play football. Ten years ago, the family moved to east London, where his parents live to this day. Musah's father Ibrahim, who had left Ghana aged 16 for the US, is a maintenance worker in a hospital.

"My parents have sacrificed a lot for me to me to have a good life," Musah said. "In the migration process, my dad went through so many different countries to find work and to be able to grow his life and settle down. Now he can't believe that his son is going to play in a World Cup and that he is living in a nicer place in London."

After moving to London in 2012, Musah joined Arsenal's academy, where he was coached by Freddie Ljungberg, who played in the Arsenal team that went undefeated throughout the 2003-04 season. England's Bukayo Saka was in the year above him.

"Freddie Ljungberg was a great coach, a huge inspiration for me," Musah said. "One day he got us to watch an 'Invincibles' movie. It was incredible to see what they achieved."

Musah did not make the grade at Arsenal, but Valencia offered him another chance. He is a regular starter for the Spanish club, which is why he made the cut for Qatar, where in the 1-1 draw against Wales on Monday he became the youngest US player to start a World Cup game.

Many have objected to Qatar hosting the World Cup, but as a practising Muslim visiting a Muslim country for the first time, Musah is not one of them.

"I'm enjoying it here because you can practise your religion really easily," he said. "The other day I was out at a shopping centre and it was time to pray and I was able to go across the road to the mosque opposite to pray."


Yunus Musah has captained England and Gio Reyna was born in Sunderland

As soon as the World Cup groups were drawn, Musah's phone began to buzz as his friends in London sent him message after message.

At the same time, Musah's USA team-mate Gio Reyna was getting messages from his Borussia Dortmund colleague Jude Bellingham, the England midfielder whom he describes as his best friend at the German club. "We have a really good relationship on and off the field," Reyna, 20, said. "When the group was announced we were the first ones to text each other, probably 30 seconds after we found out."

Reyna was born in the northeast when his father, Claudio, a former USA captain, was playing for Sunderland. "The connection with England will always be there," Reyna said. "I did have an [English] accent when I was young."

be lenient … says Fifa

ittee for Delivery & Legacy suggested last night that the guidance was not valid. It said in a statement: "This document was not developed or approved by the SC or any other State of Qatar entity."

Paola Schietekat, 28, from Mexico, was working for the World Cup organising committee last year when she complained of being assaulted by a colleague who had broken into her apartment. Authorities accused her of an affair and charged her with "extra-marital sex", which is punishable by up to seven years in jail and 100 lashes for non-Muslims.

The suspect was acquitted on charges of assault because there were "no cameras" showing the alleged attack. Schietekat remained accused and so fled the country and in April a judge dropped the case.

Meanwhile, fans staying in "cabin parks" have been offered refunds and alternative accommodation after organisers admitted they "have not met the required standards". Supporters paying up to £200 a night to stay in the two-berth cabins have complained of insufficient air conditioning and leaking lavatories. Some fans at Fan Village Cabins Zafaran and Fan Village Cabins Free Zone are said to have slept rough because they could not gain access to booked rooms.


Police should not target rainbow symbols, according to Fifa guidance

Pundit taken off air after mother's death

Keith Perry

An ITV pundit was taken off air during a World Cup match after learning that her mother had been killed by a lorry while walking home from a gym in Denmark.

Nadia Nadim, a former Manchester City player, revealed the news of the accident via Instagram on Tuesday. Her mother was "only 57", the footballer and commentator said.

Nadim, 34, who plays for Racing Louisville in the United States and is a Denmark international, was part of ITV's panel for the Denmark v Tunisia game. She was 11 when she fled Afghanistan with her mother and four sisters after the Taliban had executed her father. She took up football while in a refugee camp in Denmark. Nadim qualified as a doctor in January.

US paper tries to flag up the complexities of offside

Mario Ledwith

It remains one of the knottiest questions in the world of sport. Yet even with the advent of the Video Assistant Referee (VAR), it appears that trying to explain the notoriously tricky offside law to casual football observers remains something of a pickle.

With its country in the grips of football fever, The New York Times has tried to put any questions about the rule to bed once and for all.

Despite being the women's world champions, the paper has published a guide to the rule to coincide with the men's tournament in Qatar.

Entitled "What is offside in soccer?", the piece contains moving graphics and a series of simple explanations for different scenarios.

An introduction to the piece explains that "novice fans don't understand" the law, while more seasoned fans who claim to understand it "openly disagree about it". It further references the Canadian actor Ryan Reynolds, who bought Wales's oldest team, Wrexham, last year, who has said that "nobody understands the offside rule".

In a separate piece, the newspaper interviewed England supporters in Qatar before their opening 6-2 win against Iran, focusing on their thirst for beer.

It described how it was "hard" for England fans to give up parading "en masse through town spilling beer, chanting in an incoherent manner or drunkenly insulting people from other countries".

Such behaviours, the paper explained, are "so much a part of their soccer culture, even if soccer's worst days of hooliganism are in the past".

The US will host the 2026 World Cup with Mexico and Canada. Fifa has been trying to expand the game in the US since it hosted the event in 1994.

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Hunt activists take aim at 'serial killer'

Campaigners pillory television rat catcher who has shot 50 exotic animals, reports **Dominic Kennedy**





Ricky Clark in his trophy room, which is filled with at least 30 stuffed animals, two hides used as rugs and 20 skulls. Left, in his day job as a ratter. He posts clips of his pest control on YouTube

Britain's best-known rat catcher has become a prolific hunter of safari animals.

Ricky Clark, 46, who starred in a six-part BBC series about life as an urban pest controller, has a trophy room crammed with more than 50 of his kills.

Clark, whose enthusiastic personality and buff appearance endeared him to television producers, also claims that he is part of an exclusive hunting syndicate on the royal family's Sandringham estate in Norfolk.

However, he is to be branded a "serial killer" in an advertisement by the Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting. MPs are preparing to vote on whether to ban the import of animal parts from hunts overseas.

Clark is the media's favourite rat catcher, with the demeanour of a cheerful Londoner. His BBC1 series, *The Rat Pack*, showing how he uses dogs to rid homes of the rodents, received favourable reviews when it was launched in 2009 and was shown on stations as far away as Australia. He was featured on CNN in a report about the working life of a ratter. He has a YouTube channel with clips of his pest control. A video of Kimber, his plummer terrier, killing a large rat went viral and has been watched more than five million times.

Clark's souvenirs include a leopard he shot out of a tree in Namibia and an elephant he killed at the end of a ten-day safari, whose feet have become umbrella stands. A mountain zebra from Namibia has ended up as a rug.

Leopards are classified as threatened with extinction and African elephants are an endangered species. Such animals may be killed with the permission of countries that offer safari tourism. Clark has completed 20 safaris in at least 11 African countries and has hunted in Kyrgyzstan, Canada, Hungary, Finland, Spain, France and the Czech Republic. Among species he has shot are lion, civet, hippo, buffalo, warthog, moose, hyena and bushpig. He has killed numerous antelope, including impala, wildebeest and Lord Derby eland, and smaller breeds such as the dik-dik.

His hobby is entirely within the law, but the importation of dead bodies or parts from many of these animals would be banned under the proposed clampdown, which is to be debated in the Commons tomorrow.

Clark told an undercover investigator from the Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting that he had shot two leopards, the first in Namibia. "I shot one in self-defence at eight yards. I shot him in the nose, " he said. "I was hunting something else and he came for me."

Later, on a safari in Zambia, he shot a hippo and divided it into chunks as bait. "Four baits got hit by big toms so it was a choice of what tom I wanted to shoot. We built a blind [a hunters' hideaway]. I shot it [a leopard] out of the tree [on] the first night. That [safari] was an incredible experience. I shot buffalo, big bushbuck, a civet cat, a leopard and a hyena and some impala and some other shit."

Clark claimed to be a member of an exclusive hunting syndicate on the Sandringham estate after getting to know a gamekeeper in Norfolk. "I saw [King] Charles about three weeks ago. We hunt around William's house."

Clark has a successful pest control and property business whose clients have included Fulham FC. He is seen in his BBC series removing an adult pigeon from a woman's flat. As he carries the bird away to release it, he quips: "You are a lucky bugger. You don't know what I do for a living."

The Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting will brand Clark and other British safari hunters as "serial killers" in mobile billboard adverts outside parliament and railway stations in the run-up to the Commons vote. One poster says: "One of Britain's most prolific serial killers is still at large. Over 100 kills. Ricky Clark London." In smaller print it states: "Ban trophy hunting."

Game's up for trophy hunters

Behind the story

Seven years after the killing of Cecil the lion by an American dentist, Britain is on the brink of banning trophy hunting (Dominic Kennedy writes).

A bill due to be debated by MPs tomorrow would outlaw the importation of body parts from animals hunted overseas.

The Campaign to Ban Trophy Hunting was founded in 2018 by Eduardo Gonçalves, a former head of the League Against Cruel Sports. Last year ministers unveiled their proposed ban, which is broader than expected, with nearly 7,000 species protected. The government is expected to support the Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill brought by Henry Smith, the Conservative MP for Crawley, who has previously proposed legislation to ban hens from being kept in cages.

The campaign has been backed by the explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes, the actor Sir David Jason, the chimpanzee expert Dame Jane Goodall and the poet Benjamin Zephaniah. Social media advertisements by the campaign use emotive quotations from British trophy hunters. "Trophy hunting is like mainlining on heroin," one says. "You can't come off it easily."

The fightback by hunters is led by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation. Its head of policy and campaigns, Conor O'Gorman, argues that countries such as Namibia that encourage well-regulated hunting tourism have seen their biodiversity thrive.

O'Gorman fears that a ban on trophy hunting is a step towards forbidding all shooting for sport in Britain. "The same emotive rhetorical arguments being used by the antis and their celebrity friends to try to undermine overseas hunting," he says, "are already being used to turn public opinion against recreational shooting in the UK."

The glass divide: what your favourite wine says about you

Sophie Freeman

When you're next settling down to a glass of wine, will you be reaching for a full-bodied bottle or an acidic little number? The answer may depend on your personality, a study suggests.

According to Italian researchers, the type of wine we like to drink is influenced by certain traits: extroverts tend to prefer more acidic wines, such as champagne, while people with high emotional stability enjoy a tannic, full-bodied bottle, for example a cabernet sauvignon.

The personalities of nearly 1,200 people aged 18 to 87 were assessed for the study, using a questionnaire that measured the characteristics of agreeableness, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism and openness.

Subjects also were asked to list the wines they liked and bought. Using official reviews of the 258 wines that were mentioned by the participants, the researchers, two of whom were sommeliers, created "sensory profiles" of each.

These profiles described the degree of alcohol, acidity, sweetness, body, tannin level, sapidity (minerality), persistence [the lingering taste or aroma after swallowing] and complexity of bouquet in the wines.

Analysing the results of the personality tests together with the characteristics of the wines that people preferred, the team from the universities of Verona and Macerata found significant links between the two.

They found that extroverts, people who are enthusiastic and action-orientated, talkative and assertive, preferred wines that were more acidic and more tannic. Those who ranked high on agreeableness — co-operative people who valued social harmony — liked wines characterised by a high alcohol content and a complex bouquet best, but were "acidity-averse".

Emotionally stable people, those with a low level of neuroticism, "prefer tannic, persistent, full-bodied wines with a complex bouquet and a high alcohol content and favour wines with less sapidity", the researchers said.

Open-minded people favoured wines with persistent flavours and high levels of tannins but were averse to sapidity, they wrote in their research paper, which was published in the peer-reviewed journal Food and Quality Preference.

No significant link was found between wine preference and how conscientious a person was.

Personality types - the acid test

Extroversion
Outgoing, assertive people prefer acidic wines, the study found. The most acidic white wines generally speaking are champagne, brut sparkling wine and dry riesling, according to Jon Bennett, a wine expert. Champagne uses chardonnay and pinot noir grapes that are barely ripe. For red wines, the most acidic grape is pinot noir (for example, Burgundy).

Emotionally stable
Those who score highly for emotional stability and low for neuroticism enjoy full-bodied and tannic reds. Nebbiolo (used in barolo), cabernet sauvignon and syrah/shiraz are the three most tannic grapes, said Bennett. They usually would be described as full-bodied.

Agreeableness
Co-operative people are said to like wines with a high alcohol content and a complex bouquet, but are acidity-averse. They may enjoy a New World wine. "These tend to be higher in alcohol because the heat leads to high sugar content and therefore more sugar to convert to alcohol to make a dry wine," Bennett said. "So you might say Aussie shiraz or Californian cabernet would be complex but with high alcohol and low acidity."


müller

Andrew the musical to take a comic turn

Valentine Low

In case anyone was under the illusion that *Prince Andrew: The Musical* will be an exploration of the socio-political implications of royal privilege tainted by sexual scandal, the latest casting announcement should put paid to that.

Harry Enfield, the comedian best known for such creations as Loadsamoney and Kevin the Teenager, is to play Sir Tony Blair, the former prime minister.

Kieran Hodgson, who will be the Duke of York, will lead a cast of comics in the hour-long Channel 4 programme described as a "satirical send-up of the life and times" of Andrew set to seven original musical numbers.

Enfield's previous brush with royal satire came with *The Windsors*, the Channel 4 sitcom in which he played the then Prince of Wales.

New pictures have been released of Hodgson with other members of the cast, including Emma Sidi as Emily Maitlis. Hodgson, who is also appearing in *Two Doors Down* on BBC2, wrote the musical with Freddie Tapner. He said: "The story of Prince Andrew is tragedy and farce rolled into one, so why not add 'musical' for good measure? Some might find the prospect of writing and performing their first TV musical a tad daunting. Not me. I found it completely terrifying.

"But we've pulled out all the stops, put every penny on screen and let rip at an institution that would perhaps prefer us to forget about all this."

The late Queen's second son stepped down from public life in November 2019 amid the fallout from a BBC interview with Maitlis in which he talked about his friendship with Jeffrey Epstein, the convicted sex offender who died in a New York jail that year.

The musical from Hat Trick Productions will feature a "reimagining" of Andrew's interview and the song *I Nailed It*. There will also be a romantic duet between Andrew and Sarah Ferguson, played by Jenny Bede, entitled *Will You Be My Ex-Wife*.

Munya Chawawa will play Charles. He wrote the lyrics for his solo *Obey*, which reflects on royal scandals past and present. The finale will be *You're Always Gonna Need An Andrew*.

Stu Mather, executive producer at Hat Trick Productions, said: "What better way to celebrate the festive season than … lampooning the country's most high-profile pizza lover." The show will be screened next month.

ROB PARFITT/CHANNEL 4/PA





Emma Sidi, Munya Chawawa, Kieran Hodgson and Jenny Bede feature in the musical, written by Hodgson, left

Psychotic actually, was Grant's view

David Sanderson

Hugh Grant thought that *Love Actually* may have been the "most psychotic thing" in which he had ever appeared.

Although the 2003 Richard Curtis film, which featured ten tales exploring facets of love, was unpopular with the critics it was a commercial success and remains a cherished Christmas classic.

Grant, who plays a prime minister, Emma Thompson and Bill Nighy were among cast members who assembled for a 20th anniversary reunion on the American television channel ABC, which will be shown next week.

The network said the one-hour programme would offer new insight into behind-the-scenes secrets and the film's famous scenes as well as examining how the Covid-19 pandemic "refocused the ways we love and connect".

In a preview clip the host, Diana Sawyer, asks Thompson: "Do you remember when you saw it all the way through for the first time?" Thompson says: "I do. Hugh came up behind me as we were walking out and said, 'Is that the most psychotic thing we've ever been in?"'

Grant hated having to perform a dance routine in Downing Street but it became a memorable scene.

The Laughter & Secrets of Love Actually: 20 Years Later — A Diane Sawyer Special will be broadcast on Wednesday at 1am UK time on ABC.

What the characters did next, Times2



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Representative Example	Duration of Agreement	Upfront Cost	Monthly Device Payment	Credit Amount	Total Amount Payable	Interest Rate	Representative APR	Device Cash Price	Airtime Plan until March 2022	Airtime Plan April 2022 – March 2023	Airtime Plan April 2023 – March 2024
iPad 64GB	48 months	£20	£6.75	£323.91	£343.91	0%	0%	£343.91	£13	£13 + RPI announced in Feb 2023 = Price A	Price A + RPI announced in Feb 2024

***Each year your Airtime Plan will be increased by the Retail Price Index (RPI) rate of inflation announced in February plus 3.9%. If RPI is negative, we'll only apply the 3.9%. You'll see this increase on your April 2023 bill onwards. See o2.co.uk/prices.** Tariff includes £6.75 Device Plan for 48 months & £13 monthly rolling Airtime Plan. Initial purchase, credit & eligibility checks at full price for online & voice purchases. Lower monthly price is applied post purchase if the trade-in is approved. Trade in your old Apple iPhone with O2 Recycle to claim up to £336 trade-in value. £13.75 monthly device plan cost for non-trade in customers. **O2 Recycle:** Trade in value dependent on the model & condition. Terms apply. **O2 Refresh custom plans:** Direct purchases only. You need a monthly rolling Airtime Plan as long as you have a Device Plan. Pay off your Device Plan at any time & choose to keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade or leave. If your Airtime Plan ends you will need to pay your Device Plan in full. If you are in the first 24 months of your Device Plan & you cancel your Airtime Plan you will have to pay the remainder of your Device Plan in full. After 24 months you can keep your Airtime Plan, upgrade it, or end it without affecting your Device Plan. Data allowances cannot be carried over. Offer not available on selected platforms. Devices subject to availability. 5G available in selected areas. 5G device and sim required to access 5G. See o2.co.uk/coveragechecker for coverage. 0% APR. Finance subject to status & credit checks. 18+. Direct Debit. Credit provided by Telefónica UK Ltd, SL1 4DX. Telefónica UK is authorised & regulated by the FCA for consumer credit & insurance. Terms apply, see o2.co.uk/terms. Get up to 6 months Apple TV+ when you buy an eligible IOS device on a Plus Plan from O2 ("Qualifying Purchase"). Redeem directly with Apple via redemption code provided to you within 7 days of Qualifying Purchase. All participants must redeem by 9th November 2023. Redemption terms apply. O2 provides a 3-month subscription (a "Subscription Period"), depending on which available device or offer is chosen, added to any existing or new trial period of up to 3 months provided by Apple directly. You must set up Apple account and agree to Apple's terms of use. You'll be automatically enrolled on to a paid monthly subscription directly with Apple at the end of the relevant Subscription Period. You cannot benefit from more than one subscription period with O2. Tariff eligibility criteria applies which includes being a UK resident and 18+. No cash or alternatives. Lost redemption codes will not be replaced. Offer may be withdrawn or amended at any time. Internet access required. For how to claim and full terms: o2.co.uk/termsandconditions/rewards. Get up to 6 months Apple Music when you buy an eligible tariff direct from O2 ("Qualifying Purchase"). Redeem directly with Apple via redemption code provided to you within 7 days of Qualifying Purchase. All participants must redeem by 23rd June 2023. Redemption terms apply. O2 provides a 5-month subscription ("Subscription Period") added to any existing or new trial period of up to 1 month provided by Apple directly. You must set up Apple account and agree to Apple's terms of use. You'll be automatically enrolled on to a paid monthly subscription directly with Apple at the end of the Subscription Period. You cannot benefit from more than one subscription period with O2. Tariff eligibility criteria applies which includes being a UK resident and 18+. No cash or alternatives. Lost redemption codes will not be replaced. Offer may be withdrawn or amended at any time. Internet access required. For how to claim and full terms: o2.co.uk/termsandconditions/rewards

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Floor not fatal for Fellowes

He may convey an air of grandeur and luxury but Julian Fellowes is not above roughing it. "The art of enjoying travel is to make the best of whatever life throws at you," the *Downton Abbey* creator writes in the Catholic Herald. He once visited Nicaragua with the actor Sam Neill during its civil war and fell in with a left-wing American activist. Night came before they could reach a safe hotel so they took shelter in a public lavatory, spreading their blankets on the concrete floor by "a very ancient and smelly urinal". Fellowes, above, and Neill made the most of it, but the American was not happy at all. After listening to him tossing, turning and grumbling, Neill snapped. "It is obvious to me," he told the Yank, "that you have never spent any time at an English public school." Fellowes, who went to Ampleforth, presumably found the loo floor rather comfortable.



PAXMAN FEELS HIS AGE

Paddington Bear was named Oldie of the Year yesterday in a lunch at the National Liberal Club, a sweet tribute to the woman with whom he rattled the teacups this summer. The Queen was born in the same year as Michael Bond, the bear's creator. Alas, Paddington did not show up to collect his prize (he was probably too busy chatting with Mr Gruber) but another furry-faced purveyor of hard stares did. Jeremy Paxman, who won Cuddly Old Rottweiler of the Year, was told that the Queen had turned down one of the awards last year because she didn't feel old enough. Paxo, 72, had no such reservations. "I've felt 60 since the age of ten," he declared.

Edward Fox was also unable to accept his Old Stager award because he is still staging. The 85-year-old actor sent his apologies and explained that he was making a film. "The money is very good," he said, "and I only have to die."

FIRE DINING IN THE CITY

Sir Andrew Parmley, former lord mayor of London, had a familiar feeling on Tuesday when the fire alarm went off at Stationers' Hall during the livery company's white-tie civic dinner, tearing 120 guests away from their venison. Parmley was a warden of the Worshipful Company of Musicians a few years ago when their dinner was disrupted after fire broke out in a 17th-century oak screen at the same venue. It's good to hear that City traditions were upheld in the chaos: old hands carefully grabbed all the claret before heading out into the cold.

WORLD CUP RUNNETH OVER

It's not only the Church of England trying too hard to connect religion to football. Rabbi Jonathan Romain has sent me a selection of passages from the divine playbook that may be useful for the World Cup. When the opposition is awarded a free kick, for instance, consult Nahum ii, 5: "They shall make haste to the wall and the defence shall be prepared." Referees should follow Exodus xxi, 19 when dealing with delaying tactics — "He shall pay for the loss of time" — and Harry Kane try to avoid Psalm cxxxix, 16 in his dealings with officials: "In thy book, all my members were written." Psalm cxvi, 13 would be much better: "I will lift the cup."

PATRICK KIDD

Grandchild's hug is cure for loneliness

Eleanor Hayward
Health Correspondent

Weekly hugs from grandchildren helps to stave off loneliness in later life, a study suggests.

The research said that regularly looking after children cut the risk of feeling lonely by about 60 per cent and helped to keep brains sharp and healthy. Conversely, looking after a spouse with dementia was found to increase feelings of loneliness significantly, highlighting the need for unpaid carers in later life to be offered help.

Scientists at King's College London looked at 28 previous studies involving 191,652 over-50s in 21 countries, including Britain, and examined the link between loneliness and unpaid care.

The study, in the journal Aging and Mental Health, reported that grandparents who spent 12 hours a week looking after grandchildren were 60 per cent less likely to say they felt lonely than those who did not.

It said grandparents may have to take part in "time-intensive activities such as bathing and feeding", but that these were often "rewarding and meaningful", boosting their social life.

The study added: "Caregiving for grandchildren may stimulate older people's brains by active engagement in diverse activities, constant learning experiences from a younger generation, make them feel more integrated in society, and give them opportunities to share their life experiences and feel needed." It noted that "cultural expectations" meant older women were often more likely to look after children, and suggested that grandfathers should be handed more babysitting responsibilities to reduce loneliness in men.

The research also highlighted the isolation faced by older adults living with a husband or wife who has dementia. There are an estimated 700,000 people in the UK acting as primary, unpaid carers for people with the condition, and the study said this could be "an isolating experience with limited opportunities for social engagement".

Loneliness and social isolation puts people at greater risk of high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, depression and dementia. It is linked to a 26 per cent higher risk of early death, and experts say it should be regarded as a public health problem similar to smoking and obesity.

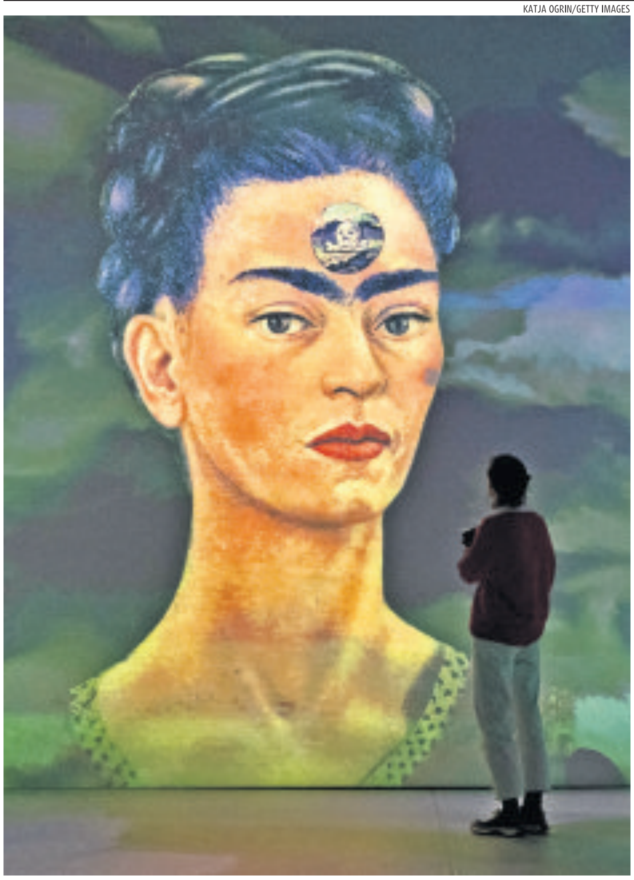
Dr Matthew Prina, a co-author of the study, said: "This is the first review of its kind to investigate systematically the relationship between older people's caregiving and volunteering activities and loneliness. Further research will now be necessary to investigate the needs of older caregivers. This could help shed light on the optimal 'dose' of volunteering and caring for grandchildren and identify ways to maximise their potential beneficial effects."

The golden age of the grandparent is now, leading article, page 33

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KATJA OGRIN/GETTY IMAGES



Face to face The Life and Work of Frida Kahlo, an immersive journey through the career of the Mexican painter, opens tomorrow at the Reel Store in Coventry

CV details can cause bias, says social mobility chief

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

The chairwoman of the Social Mobility Commission has told MPs that she does not look at CVs in detail because they can make you biased.

Katharine Birbalsingh, also the head teacher of Michaela Community School in northwest London, was challenged yesterday about the political balance of the board by MPs on the women and equalities committee.

Of seven commissioners announced in September, three have links to the Conservative Party and only one is a woman. One commissioner had to stand down because he did not have permission to work in the UK beyond January.

The committee asked Birbalsingh for her views on the commissioners, who include Rob Wilson, the former Tory MP for Reading East, Ryan Henson, the party's 2019 candidate for Bedford, and Resham Kotecha, director of the Conservative Policy Network who stood for election in Dulwich in 2015 and Coventry in 2017.

The other commissioners are Dr Raghib Ali, a consultant in acute medicine who has advised the government and written for the Conservative Home website, Matthew Goodwin, a politics professor who writes on immigration and populism, and Parminder Kohli, a senior vice-president at Shell.

Birbalsingh said she had not been aware of the political background of Wilson, Henson and Kotecha because she "wasn't looking at those kinds of details on their CVs".

She said: "On the day we were appointing, I didn't even realise that was the case." Asked how she had not been aware, she said: "You've got a big pack of stuff, you've got two and a half days of interviews, it's all very fast. I don't like to look at too many details on a CV whenever I appoint at anything because it can bias you against the applicant."

She told the committee that the most important factor was what candidates said about social mobility and their understanding of the issues, adding: "It certainly wasn't the case that I thought, 'Yes we want him because he's a Conservative.' I'm a small c conservative but not a big c Conservative."

On driving up standards, she said it was important to change behaviours at home. She added: "One could think, they need to read so we need to give them a book. The thing is, one book is not what we need to change behaviour. That's about encouraging parents to get a few books, to go to the library."

Private parking fines up by 50% in a year

Ben Clatworthy
Transport Correspondent

Drivers have been hit by a 50 per cent increase in the number of parking tickets issued by private companies.

A record 2.7 million tickets were handed out between April and June, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency data revealed, up from 1.8 million in the same period last year. The RAC Foundation claimed that it was "inconceivable" that so many drivers were intentionally breaking rules.

The figures showed the number of records obtained from the agency by companies chasing car owners. A ticket can cost a driver up to £100. In July, the government withdrew a long-awaited code of practice after a legal challenge by parking companies.

The government said: "We recognise there have been unacceptable practices by a small number of cowboy companies. We will introduce our private parking code of practice as soon as possible to help tackle this."



DANNY LAWSON/PA



Ready, steady, blow The Teesside skyline will be barer this morning after the destruction of a 365ft-high blast furnace at an abandoned steelworks in Redcar. The explosion was heard 23 miles away in Hartlepool

Shops crack down on theft of butter

Andrew Ellson
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

A growing number of everyday groceries are being security-tagged as shoplifting increases amid the cost of living crisis.

Reports are emerging of items such as butter, cheese and meat being tagged or locked in security boxes to deter people from stealing. One Co-op store in Manchester has locked £3 washing machine tablets in security boxes.

Theft of everyday groceries is a growing problem for stores. Glasgow North police said this week that two people had been arrested and charged for "numerous thefts of milk". Last month the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that shoplifting had increased by 18 per cent in the year to the end of June compared with the previous 12-month period.

The tags or boxes can be removed only at the checkout once the customer has paid. If anyone tries to remove a tagged or boxed product from a shop without paying, it triggers an alarm.

The security measures have raised concerns that some people are so desperate for food that they are being forced to steal. However, others, including some people claiming to work in stores, have said that products are often stolen by small-time criminals who then sell the items door to door or in pubs. One commentator on Twitter, discussing Co-op's use of security boxes for £3 boxes of Daz, wrote: "Anybody who thinks shoplifters are desperate people stealing to survive has never been in a rough working-class pub on a Friday night and seen them flogging cheese and packs of bacon."

One of the reasons stealing food has become more attractive is the pace at which prices have been rising. Over the past year grocery costs have risen by almost 15 per cent on average, according to the ONS, although this masks wide variations, with some items going up by much more.

Recent research by the consumer group Which? found that some branded items, such as Dolmio sauce, had doubled in price in some stores.

One senior supermarket figure admitted that more tags were being used. "Supermarkets are trying to take a measured approach but they are making big losses from theft," he said. "The growing use of tags is partly a reflection of prices rising, so more items are falling into the price band where it makes sense to tag them. Often the choice of what products to tag is left to local store managers' discretion.

"Tags are only being used in certain areas because they have a cost. There is little point, for example, using them in a village store where people generally don't steal anything."

MPs 'deeply disturbed' by conditions at Boohoo

Billy Kenber
Senior Investigations Reporter
Tom Ball, Tom Howard

MPs have described conditions at a Boohoo warehouse exposed by a Times investigation as "deeply disturbing".

The British retailer's share price fell steeply early yesterday before recovering to a fall of 1.1 per cent after the revelations that staff at Boohoo's Burnley distribution facility had to walk up to the equivalent of a half-marathon in temperatures of up to 32C. The report found that conditions had led to workers collapsing in the aisles. Staff complained of racism and sexual harassment and said no accommodation was made when they suffered injuries.

Mel Stride, the work and pensions secretary, told Times Radio that the investigation revealed "deeply disturbing" conditions. He said: "In the event that any [regulations] have been breached … I have no doubt the appropriate consequences will follow."

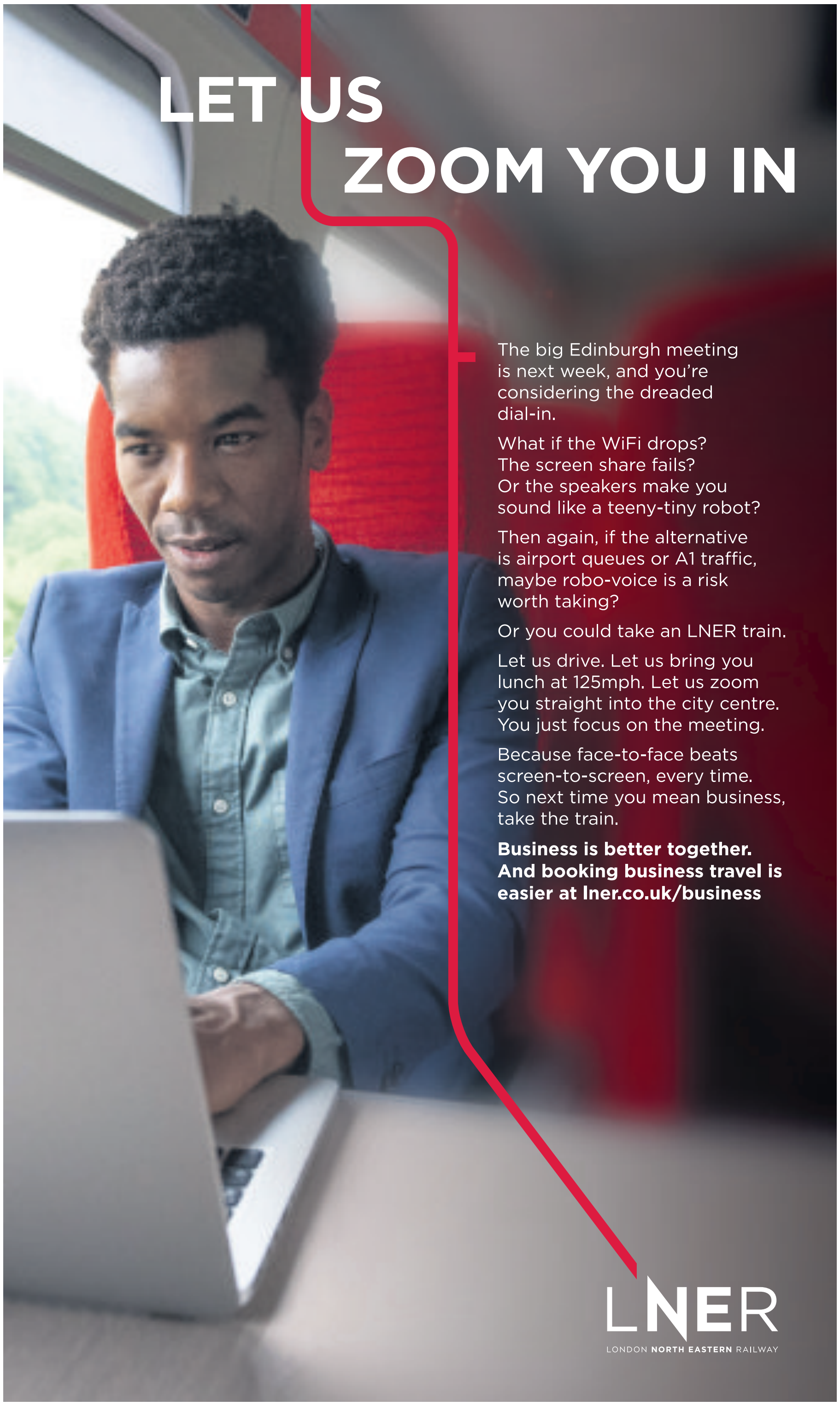
Philip Dunne, chairman of the environmental audit committee, which had investigated Boohoo, said the report's findings offered a "bleak view of some practices in fast fashion in the UK".

Andrew Wade, a retail analyst at Jefferies investment banking group, said welfare was not to be taken lightly. "However, many of the issues raised by The Times initially appear to be either isolated in nature, or part of working in a busy warehouse," he added.

Boohoo said: "Whilst we take these claims very seriously, they are not reflective of the environment at our Burnley warehouse."

The firm said safety and comfort in the workplace were "our highest priority" and added that Boohoo had prepared for heat with fans and monitored pregnant women.

Warehouse "slaves", letters, page 32



Alzheimer's memory loss drug set for NHS

Eleanor Hayward Health Correspondent

The first Alzheimer's drug to significantly slow memory decline could be available on the NHS next year, experts have said.

In a "historic moment" this year, trial results revealed that Lecanemab slowed progression of the disease by 27 per cent compared with patients taking a placebo.

Dementia experts said the first British patients could soon be given the drug and that "we're seeing the beginning of Alzheimer therapies".

However, they warned that only 5 per cent of patients would be able to gain access to Lecanemab unless there was a big increase in the number of NHS dementia clinics able to identify those who could benefit.

The drug, which clears the build-up of toxic amyloid proteins in the brain, has not yet been approved for use in the UK.

Sir John Hardy, a professor at the University College London Institute of Neurology, said: "It depends upon regulatory authorities, but I would guess that we would see the first people [treated] towards the end of next year."

More detail on the Lecanemab study will be presented next week to a conference in the United States on Alzheimer's clinical trials.

Speaking at an Alzheimer's Research UK briefing, experts said Britain had much to do to prepare for the drug, including accurately diagnosing the disease.

Biomarker tests can detect whether people have a build-up of the amyloid protein, but they are not widely available on the NHS, so doctors would not know which patients would benefit from the medicine.

Liz Coulthard, from the University of Bristol, said the "vast majority of people" did not have a biomarker diagnosis and people would be given the drug only if they had had one.

Asked what proportion of patients would benefit from the drug, Coulthard said: "I would guess 5 per cent. It would be given in the private sector because you'd be able to access biomarker tests [in the private sector]. Then there are a few clinics in major cities who are doing biomarker tests now. It will be a small proportion of those who could be eligible, unless something changes.

"Or what will happen is we'll have massive waiting times. So people will be on a waiting list and by the time they come to see us, they'll be too advanced for the drug, which would be terrible."

The medicine, created by Eisai, a Tokyo-based drugs company, and Biogen, of the US, is designed to treat mild cognitive impairment in patients with amyloid in the brain.

Until a blood test for the presence of amyloid is available, dementia services must rely on biomarker tests or brain scans, both of which are expensive and can have long waiting lists.

EMILY WHITFIELD-WICKS/PA



Dirty protest Surfers against Sewage at the scene of "crimes" on Long Rock beach in Penzance, Cornwall, as the government releases this year's Water Quality report

Blood test can identify fatal heart condition

Eleanor Hayward Health Correspondent

Scientists have developed a simple £50 blood test that can be used to diagnose a deadly heart condition.

It is the first to detect myocarditis, or inflammation of the heart, and could be available on the NHS next year.

Myocarditis causes sudden death in one young adult or teenager a week. It also can lead to debilitating symptoms such as fatigue and chest pain. It is difficult to diagnose and patients must undergo a heart biopsy, which is expensive, invasive and risky.

A team of British Heart Foundation researchers at Queen Mary University of London have identified a molecule in the blood — c-Met — that strongly indicates if a person has myocarditis. The molecule is expressed by some T cells, a type of white blood cell, which can be detected in a routine blood test. Results are available within hours.

Research published in the journal Circulation compared blood samples from patients, including 34 people with a final diagnosis of myocarditis. Those with myocarditis had a higher level of T cells with c-Met on their surface compared with other groups, including heart attack patients, and those with no medical condition.

Federica Marelli-Berg, lead author of the study, said: "We need to confirm these findings in a larger study, but we hope that it won't be long until this blood test is in regular use."

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Trainer sues vets after prize horse died from infection

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A racing trainer is claiming £350,000 from vets for allegedly causing the unnecessary death of a prize horse after the misdiagnosis of a mystery lump.

Sand Diego, a three-year-old, was said to have had a bright future, having just registered his first win, when he was put down two years ago.

A specialist from Shotter & Byers, an equine veterinary services provider, examined the horse and concluded that the lump on his hind leg was "probably" the result of the animal having "knocked himself".

A hearing at the High Court in London has been told, however, that the swelling turned out to be a sign the horse was suffering a serious and ultimately fatal infection. Peter Crate, 60, Sand Diego's trainer, is suing the veterinary surgery, which is based in Dorking, Surrey, through his company for £350,000.

Crate has alleged that the specialists should have diagnosed the infection before it progressed to the point where the horse had to be destroyed.

Lawyers for the trainer, whose yard is in Reigate, Surrey, say the horse would have survived and been a potentially successful racer again had he received prompt antibiotic treatment.

Lawyers for the defence have said the vets deny the allegations, insisting that the horse was a "goner".

Speaking after a preliminary hearing, Crate said Sand Diego had been a very valuable horse with a "bright and rosy future ahead of him", having just won his latest race. The trainer said he had been affected by the death of the young horse and from watching him suffer during his last days.

Crate's company, J&J Franks, which owned Sand Diego, is suing the vets in a claim that has alleged negligent treatment.

Michael Mylonas KC, for the trainer's company, said that the vet who treated Sand Diego, Barbara Portal, had delayed dosing the horse with antibiotics until his illness was well advanced.

The court has been told that initially Portal performed a blood test on the horse and attributed his condition to an abscess or trapped nerve. The next day she noted a large swelling on the animal's leg and commented that "he had probably knocked himself".

Mylonas told the court that the vet saw the horse every day over the next five days, after which Sand Diego was taken to the Liphook Equine Hospital to be put down.

"The horse was in fact suffering from an infection of the hind leg," he said. "The claimant's expert evidence is unanimous that with timely administration it would have recovered and returned to full pre-infection form."

Lawyers for the surgery have denied that the vets were negligent in making a late diagnosis. They said the horse had suffered from "an extreme manifestation of an unusual condition" and added that a sustained course of antibiotic treatment probably would not have altered the horse's fate.

Even if Sand Diego had survived, it was "not admitted that he would have been capable of returning to racing at the previous level".

After the pre-trial hearing, Crate said he remained "steadfast in proving the horse was failed in the treatment he was given".

Crate owns a stable of racehorses owned through his company, which he trains himself. In total, Crate's horses have had 327 starts and have registered 32 wins, 49 second place finishes and 40 third places.

Sand Diego ran four races during a brief career before he was struck down, winning at Sandown Park in September 2019 and twice finishing second.

A full trial has been set for March.





Barbara Portal attributed the condition of Sand Diego at first to a trapped nerve or abscess. Peter Crate says he was upset by the horse's death

CHAMPION NEWS



Sand Diego won at Sandown Park in September 2019 before he was struck down

Avian flu kills 60 of King's swans at Windsor in a week

Valentine Low

About a third of the swans owned by the King near Windsor Castle have died from avian flu in the past week, according to a bird charity.

Volunteers have spent six days fishing the bodies of more than 60 birds out of the Thames. Signs on the riverbank warn the public not to feed the swans and to stay away from the water's edge.

The flock was first affected in January, when seven birds died and 26 had to be put down in a move that was thought to have ended the outbreak. The King owns 200 swans on the three-mile stretch of river that winds around Windsor Castle from Romney Lock to Boveney Lock, near Dorney, Berkshire.

Wendy Hermon, 54, operations director for the charity Swan Support, said: "I have been looking after the royal swans for 30 years beneath the castle and I have never seen anything like this before.

"In 2018 avian flu killed more, with about 70 swans lost, but that was over about a month — this time they are dying so fast they are literally dying right in front of your eyes. On Sunday I was recovering the bodies of three swans that had died by Romney Lock and saw a swan that looked unwell but it did not look as if it was in real distress. Within ten minutes it just rolled over and died right in front of me.

"There is nothing you can do — if you take them in for shelter and to treat them the influenza will kill all the other birds, so you just have to let nature run its cruel course," she said.

"I have 15 volunteers and we are out on the riverbanks and in kayaks in protective gear and getting as many dead swans out of the water as quickly as we can daily."

She said the birds "go off for immediate incineration in big bins".

A source at Windsor Castle said: "King Charles takes an enormous interest in the wildlife on all the royal estates and beyond, and particularly so at Windsor as he is now the head ranger. He will be deeply upset about this major outbreak and the King's swan marker, David Barber, who did the job for 30 years for the Queen, will be keeping the Palace informed."



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Mother who killed paedophile warns of abuse loophole

David Woode Crime Correspondent

A mother who killed the paedophile that abused her sons has called for tighter restrictions to stop sex offenders changing their names.

Sarah Sands stabbed Michael Pleasted, 77, eight times in 2014. He had been regarded as friendly and helpful but neighbours on their housing estate in Silvertown, east London, were unaware he had 24 convictions for sex offences spanning three decades and had served time in prison.

During Sands's Old Bailey trial, it emerged that Pleasted had changed his name from Robin Moult to hide his past.

In 2015, Sands was cleared of murder but convicted of manslaughter on the basis of





Sarah Sands carrying the knife that she used to kill Michael Pleasted. She said she wanted him to confess so her sons did not have to testify in court

loss of control. She was jailed for seven and a half years and later said: "I did what any mother would do."

Now, after her release, Sands is campaigning to close a legal loophole that allows sex offenders to change their name by deed poll. She told *BBC Breakfast* yesterday: "For paedophiles, if you touch children, there has to be consequences. And hiding behind name changes … That right to change their name has to be taken away from them."

Sands's sons, Bradley, now 20, and twins Alfie and Reece, 19, have waived their legal right to anonymity. The family's story has been told in a BBC documentary, *Killing My Children's Abuser*.

Alfie and Reece, who were 11 when their mother killed Pleasted, believe he could have preyed on other children. Reece told BBC News: "It was nice knowing that he was dead. If we'd known he was locked away, I'm sure that would have been just as satisfying. [If] this guy's still walking about, and I know what he's done to me and he's still about, one of us would be in her place."

Alfie said it "did make us feel safer" knowing he was dead, adding: "It didn't slow down the nightmares. But it did give us a sense of security because you didn't have to walk down the street thinking he was going to come around the corner."

Pleasted had contact with children through his job sorting newspapers at a newsagent. He groomed Bradley and gained access to his younger brothers, inviting them to his home.

Sands said Alfie and Reece had told her about the abuse before Bradley revealed he was also a victim. Pleasted was arrested and charged with offences against the three boys. He was released on bail and returned to the estate.

The court was told that Sands drank two bottles of wine before arming herself with a kitchen knife and heading to Pleasted's home. CCTV showed her approaching his third floor flat, emerging 20 minutes later with a bloodstained knife. Pleasted was found dead in the hallway of his flat and Sands handed herself in to police.

Sands told jurors she had pleaded with Pleasted to confess his crimes and spare her sons giving evidence, adding: "I was frightened. It was not how it was meant to go. He was meant to listen to me."

Sarah Champion, a Labour MP, told the BBC that some offenders were using name changes to avoid criminal records checks needed for jobs including working with children.

She said: "Once they have changed their names, they are able to get a new driving licence and passport in that name."

The Home Office said it had reviewed the problem, and that strict rules applied to sex offenders not in prison.

BBC NEWS



Sarah Sands with her sons Alfie, Reece and Bradley, who have waived their right to anonymity to discuss their ordeal

IN THE TIMES TOMORROW

BUSINESS

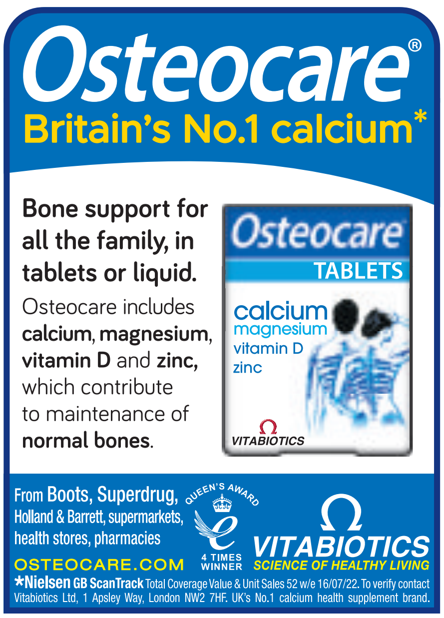
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EMMA DUNCAN
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MAIN PAPER





In Scotland and Wales, in store alcohol prices may be higher and alcohol may not be sold before 10am in accordance with Scottish laws. Roasted Salted Peanuts 200g, 23p per 100g. Roasted Salted Cashews 125g, 58.4p per 100g. Lock Ten Brewing Co. Craft Beers 330ml, £3.30 per litre. Pretzel Thins 80g, £1.24 per 100g. Rossini Italian Lager 12 x 330ml, £2.78 per litre. San Miguel 18 x 330ml, £2.36 per litre. Photography shows serving suggestion. Products may vary by region and prices may vary in Scotland, Wales and online.

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News



Prime location The temperature may not be zero yet, but the ice rink by the park at the Queen's House, Greenwich,



University personal statements 'unfair on poorer candidates'

Nicola Woolcock Education Editor

University personal statements should be scrapped and replaced with short questions to make it fairer, a report says.

The free-form essay part of the application discriminates against poorer candidates and prevents them from showing their full potential, according to the Higher Education Policy Institute, a think tank.

Clare Marchant, chief executive of Ucas, the admissions service, told The Times last year that she was in favour of reform.

Academics analysed 164 personal statement drafts, written for the university admission forms of 83 applicants from underrepresented backgrounds. They found that 83 per cent of drafts failed to supply an evidence-based opinion about a relevant academic topic. Many applicants struggled to organise their statement effectively, with 35 per cent failing to write with cohesive paragraphs in at least one of their drafts. Some candidates had spent 30 to 40 hours trying to craft this part of the form.

The report's authors say the open space of the form should be replaced with two short-response questions asking about the applicant's interest in their course and their relevant skills.

The present format creates inequalities because advantaged applicants are better supported to meet the challenge, the report says, while deprived applicants see it as more of a burden.

Tom Fryer, lead author of the report, said: "Is it any wonder that an essay without a question, a 'personal statement' that's more academic than personal, generates an ambiguity which allows those with more support to thrive? Universities are currently operating an admissions system that contradicts their own code of practice. The personal statement should be replaced by short-response questions."

Lee Elliot Major, a professor of social mobility at the University of Exeter, said personal statements had become "little more than barometers of middle-class privilege and are no longer fair or fit for purpose in university admissions.

"This review adds to mounting evidence that reforms are now needed to ensure statements are an effective way of capturing a student's passion for their subject and their academic potential."

Kevin Gilmartin, a post-16 specialist at the Association of Schools and College Leaders, said he welcomed the "principle of levelling the playing field in terms of university admissions".

He added: "The research indicates that the personal statement in its current form favours more advantaged students, as they are more likely to receive extensive support from families and other sources.

"Students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to be able to draw on that support, particularly where students come from families with little experience of university."

He said parents or carers of disadvantaged students were often too busy working long hours to make ends meet to be able to offer other forms of support.

"While teachers work hard to support students with personal statements by providing advice and guidance, they cannot solve a systemic inequity and it is the system that needs to change," Gilmartin said.

CATS PROTECTION/GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS



Flossie had outlived two owners before she was given a home with Vicki Green, who at 27 is only slightly older than her pet



is perfectly situated at 0 degrees longitude

Payout for dyslexic M&S worker sacked over mistakes in emails

Jonathan Ames Legal Editor

A dyslexic worker who spent more than 20 years at Marks and Spencer has been awarded £50,000 after she was sacked for making mistakes in emails.

Rita Jandu, who worked for the High Street chain for 22 years, struggled to read and write lengthy messages and preferred to communicate using bullet points.

An employment tribunal heard that Jandu was "singled out" by bosses at the department store who selected her for redundancy after she appeared to rush her work and her emails contained inaccuracies.

The tribunal has now ruled that M&S managers ignored the impact that Jandu's dyslexia had on her work including her ability to concentrate and communicate. Jandu was awarded £53,855 for disability discrimination and unfair dismissal.

The hearing, in central London, was told that Jandu was employed at M&S as an assistant buyer before working her way up to the position of clothing and home planner.

Her bosses were aware that Jandu had dyslexia and that she struggled with note-taking, writing emails, writing as people were speaking and concentration. The tribunal was told that at Jandu's request, her previous line manager often proofread important emails before they were sent. She also asked for important sections of long emails to be colour coded.

Despite the condition affecting her work, in 2019 a manager informed Jandu that she was "one of the high performers on the team". Although, at the same time, she was told that "sometimes communications appear rushed and not thought through before you send".

Jandu told the tribunal that "writing a paragraph is the hardest thing to do as my words are muddled up". She said: "That is why I did bullet points — all my emails are very, very similar — for me, it is not rushed, it might be rushed for someone who can write a lot, but I have taken my time to do it."

In July 2020, during the coronavirus pandemic, M&S consulted on redundancy options with staff being rated against a list of criteria. If Jandu had scored one more point in the process, she would have been safe.

She was told her position was at risk, and bosses said she became "too upset" to apply for other vacancies.

Jandu appealed against the decision to make her redundant and raised concerns around her dyslexia but she was told that her condition had not affected the decision.

Holly Stout, the tribunal judge, said in the ruling that M&S had a legal obligation to make reasonable adjustments to cater for Jandu's disability. In this case that would have meant discounting any disability-related effects when assessing her against the redundancy criteria.

M&S said it was "disappointed by the tribunal's decision. We ensure that all line managers conducting assessments for redundancy exercises complete mandatory training so that scoring is fair and objective".

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Oldest cat in world wins by a whisker

Flossie, who is deaf and mostly blind has been named the world's oldest living cat (Jack Malvern writes). She is at least 26 years and 330 days old, Guinness World Records said.

Flossie, who lives in Orpington, southeast London, had outlived two owners before Cats Protection put her with Vicki Green, 27. Flossie's record places her ahead of Corduroy, from the US, the previous title holder, who was 26 years and 300 days old on May 27, 2016 and died that year.

Ofcom 'will get more power than spies' to monitor apps

Mark Sellman
Technology Correspondent

The media regulator will have greater surveillance powers than spy agencies under laws being considered by parliament, a legal analysis has claimed.

Ofcom is being given authority under the Online Safety Bill to force technology companies to crack down on terrorism and child abuse content on private messaging apps such as WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Telegram and Signal.

These services are "end-to-end" encrypted, meaning that only the users know the content of messages, not the platforms. Under the bill, the regulator will be able to order companies to use technology to scan messages to root out terrorism or child abuse. A failure to comply would result in a fine of up to 10 per cent of the company's worldwide revenue.

The power granted to Ofcom "permits the state to compel [technology firms] to carry out surveillance of the content of communications on a generalised and widespread basis", Matthew Ryder said in a legal opinion commissioned by Index on Censorship, a free speech organisation.

Ofcom would not need prior authorisation for issuing a demand for scanning messages and there was no independent oversight of such powers, Ryder, a human rights barrister, said. This meant Ofcom would be able to act more freely than GCHQ does under a far more limited power of surveillance governed by the Investigatory Powers Act. Ryder believes the measure will breach human rights laws.

The Online Safety Bill is aimed at making the online world safer for children and adults. It places new responsibilities on social media and search companies to tackle harmful and illegal content on their platforms. Its passage through the Commons has been paused because of a review that seeks to address freedom of speech concerns about a separate section of the legislation.


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Brexit has grown sectarian: it's time for peace
Iain Martin
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Comment

Meghan is doing the monarchy a favour

The Sussexes' obsessive attention-seeking is enhancing the stature of other royals who might otherwise face criticism

David Aaronovitch



@DAARONOVITCH

Never mind rail strikes, over the festive period we're in a for a Harrying. The solo Sussex book is due out at the beginning of January and the him-and-hers Netflix series a few weeks earlier. Or perhaps it's the other way round; it keeps changing. Either way, a lot of money has gone into making sure no sentient British being will be unaware of these transmissions when they happen.

Are we horrified? An anticipatory piece in Esquire magazine commented that, "ever since the memoir was announced, royal watchers have eagerly awaited its release, hopeful that it might reveal more bombshells from inside the House of Windsor". But why would "royal watchers" want things to be disclosed that might damage the monarchy they so enjoy watching? Is it possibly true that some of the people professing to be horrified by the prospect of "revelations" from the Californian branch of the family are actually looking forward to just that?

The publisher's puff for *Spare* (the cleverly titled Harry book) promises the "story at last" of what he was going through when he walked behind his mother's coffin in the early autumn of 1997, an image which they describe — with epic insensitivity — as "one of the most searing of the 20th century". I won't insult you by attempting a list of alternative candidates: you know them already.

But then the American Sussexes are not blessed with the most sensible of friends. The Robert F Kennedy Ripple of Hope award, for their lonely fight against supposed racism in the royal family, is an almost perfect example of lazy, wealthy American liberal condescension. It is almost as though it was designed solely to make the pair even more unpopular among their critics.

Of whom I am not one. I am an agnostic on the question of whether the Sussexes are good or bad people, not least because I don't know them and they don't really matter in a material way. The more babies the Waleses have and the longer they survive, the more distant Harry becomes from ever being head of state. He was always destined to become increasingly constitutionally irrelevant as he got older.

His wife is a star and, as Tina Brown reminds us, stars have shelf lives. Their series can be cancelled. Their only way of staying

> In his wife, Harry sees the recreation of his martyred mother

"important" is to produce "hits" — books, podcasts, stories, films, self-help nonsense, recipe books — and, if nothing else works, appearances on reality shows. Some of this will be about money. But a lot is clearly psychological. Among some people there is a need not just to be seen and appreciated but to be constantly inside other people's heads — to be what you might call a "psychic imperialist".

In Meghan, it has become increasingly clear, Harry both sees and needs to see the recreation of his martyred mother — shunned by the establishment and hounded by the press. This is the story they tell themselves. Each time they come under fire from the tabloids or the talk shows, there is more vindication for their paranoia, another turn of the ratchet. So they do a Diana: reach beyond the murderous hacks and the corrupted press offices to commune directly with their public.

Diana, of course, was the ultimate psychic imperialist. "I will be Queen of people's hearts," she told Martin Bashir in a line I don't believe he wrote for her. It is an utterly mad sentiment. And reading it should remind us that almost every negative thing said about Meghan was once said about her posthumous mother-in-law.

But to be colonised in this way, to have your heart invaded by a Diana, you have to sign up to it. And this, not Megan's Paltrowism or Harry's self-pity, is what interests me most. Just look below the line of almost any posted piece about Meghan and you will see a speed and strength of response that is out of all proportion. Folk who will happily give the husband of the King's niece a pass on going to the jungle with Matt Hancock in search of himself, a shedload of money and a slice more of fame, will shred the Duchess.

It goes both ways of course. Polling from September showed that among those aged 18 to 24 Harry topped the list of "favourite royals" at 29 per cent with his wife second, ten points behind. Among the over-65s Harry was nowhere and Meghan came two points below Andrew. This suggests firstly that our views of the royals are substantially our projections onto them. And secondly that these prejudices are partly generational.

The American-based British-born conservative Andrew Sullivan (60 next year), discussing the Duchess and her sister-in-law on his podcast

MEGA



The only way that Meghan can stay relevant is to keep producing "hits"

recently, practically cast them as millennial Maleficent versus Briar Rose. "What level of narcissism is required to get in there, become the perfect princess, whine and then storm out?" he asked of Meghan. Whereas Kate was full of "charm and grace and beauty and a good mother".

So the two women become proxies in a particularly soggy part of the generation/culture war. The young, reared on Kardashian Kulture, tend to imagine they identify with Meghan. She's rich, beautiful and speaks the language of love, glamour and hurt — the language of Instagram. She is a strong woman because she tells you how weak she is. She is resilient because she is fragile.

Equally, the boomers loathe her, seeing in her the things they fear they have provoked in their own children: peanut allergies, dyslexia, ADHD and neediness. Whereas they possess in Kate the archetype of the pretty, dutiful, smiling, uncomplaining mother. The perfect stoical helpmeet for a future king.

But it strikes me that Meghan may be fulfilling another function. It's often said she and Harry are damaging the monarchy, but I wonder if the opposite isn't true. The monarchy feels solid in a period of

> The two duchesses are proxies in a soggy part of the generation war

flux. The Queen was succeeded by the King, while prime ministers rose and fell, prices just rose, living standards just fell. It seems a rock in a choppy sea.

But the monarchy is also a peculiar institution, staffed by hugely wealthy, privileged and unaccountable individuals and their highly manipulative entourages. It is not impossible in hard times to resent their high living and envy their comfort. Instead, however, we can argue about Meghan and Harry and whether they are awful people, and we can call her a narcissist and call him a thicko, and the egalitarian lightning is conducted away from the important part of the monarchy to strike in California.

Hating on Meghan is safe republicanism. We should thank her for her service.

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AI will shift power towards the autocrats

Democracy thrives on spreading wealth and ideas, two key qualities threatened by technology

James Marriott



@J_AMESMARRIOTT

Phew. After a punishing decade, democracy has had a good year. God knows it needed one. In the US midterms American voters rejected election deniers and declined to deliver the Trumpist Republican party its anticipated "red wave". In Brazil, power has been transferred peacefully. With every day, Putin's invasion of Ukraine looks more of a mess. And though Xi Jinping's grip on China may be tight, the country's faltering economy and nightmarish cycle of lockdowns hardly amounts to an advertisement for the wisdom and competence of autocrats.

Marvellous news, obviously. But I detect a mood of premature celebration. The political scientist Francis Fukuyama is already buoyantly insisting that "this really is the end of history". Commentators are cheerily picking over the failures of bungling dictators and lauding democracy's "competitive advantage": its flexibility, stability and longevity. But one year of success does not guarantee the future. The enemies of democracy are always accusing our system of short-termism and a chronic inability to look beyond the next election. Well, let us prove them wrong and take a longer (and more pessimistic) view.

Stuck in the present, we too easily forget how new democracy is. Britain has been a full democracy for less than a century — women got full rights to vote only in 1928. You might trace full American democracy to the Voting Rights Act of 1965 — and 25 years later for much of Europe. From the perspective of history, democracy is a fragile aberration. Our political system is not inevitable but the recent product of specific historical circumstances.

Fukuyama himself suggests in his book *Political Order and Political Decay* that we might think of political systems as organisms, adapted to "specific environmental niches". According to this metaphor, modern democracy is a fluffy new creature which first began to evolve in the early 19th century, a time when the new technologies of the industrial revolution were spreading wealth through society, empowering the middle classes and urban workers. Here lie the beginnings of democracy's competitive advantage.

> Will the future AI barons pay huge taxes to sustain the jobless?

A free press facilitated the public debate of complex new ideas and the agitation of the middle class produced electoral and meritocratic reforms that took power and influence out of the hands of a small group of aristocrats. This gave democracies better access to the ideas and talents of all their citizens, making them more flexible and more innovative — compare Cold War era American technology to its Soviet equivalent.

In the 20th century, democracies tended to outperform autocracies, which were limited to the dubious "wisdom" of one leader and his council of greying yes-men. In democracies, bad ideas and bad leaders can be rejected in elections. As we have seen this year, autocrats stick around and tend to double down on stupid plans such as invading Ukraine or shutting down major cities at a whiff of Covid.

But can our hopeful organism, democracy, retain its advantage in the harsher environment of the 21st century? Well, the technological landscape is changing. Unlike print media, social media inhibits complex debate and supercharges partisanship. Fake news poisons the flow of information. Good ideas spread less easily across party lines and voters reward candidates for their partisan commitment not for their wisdom. Witness Liz Truss. The crucial democratic advantage of openness to new ideas is weakened.

Artificial intelligence presents another problem. A crucial part of democracy in the early 19th century ("the age of revolutions"), is the way that wealthier, less rooted populations became more difficult for autocratic leaders to control than rural peasants had been. Today, new facial recognition and population monitoring technologies pioneered in China are shifting power and control back towards autocrats.

In democracies, AI may soon cause trouble by concentrating wealth in the hands of those who own the robots while taking jobs away from workers. Will the AI barons of the future fork out huge taxes to sustain the unemployed? Historically, democracies have remained stable by (generally) being better than autocracies at making citizens richer. The surest route to revolution has been an impoverished middle class. When citizens feel worse off, confidence in democracy falls rapidly, as we have seen in recent decades. In America, concern about automation correlated with support for Trump.

More futuristically, the writer Yuval Noah Harari warns that the intellectual advantage of democracies is threatened by AI. You don't even need a powerful, educated and free middle class to produce ideas and economic growth if machines can fight your wars and do your scientific research. Not all of this may be so distant. Harari imagines that "an authoritarian government that orders all its citizens to have their DNA sequenced and to share their medical data with some central authority would gain an immense advantage in genetics and medical research over societies in which medical data are strictly private". In this world, autocracy not democracy may have the advantage in ideas and in growth.

This, obviously, is the pessimistic case, but a certain vigilant pessimism is required. Democracy is not an inevitability but a young and vulnerable creature. As "environmental niches" go, the 21st century is shaping up to be a strange and hostile one. And if some of this seems futuristic, well, every so often we should take the opportunity to think in decades and centuries, not months and years.

THUNDERER

Expenses handed to MP behind bars should be returned

Jawad Iqbal

There is something very wrong with a parliamentary expenses system that allows a convicted former Tory MP to claim thousands of pounds after he was found guilty of sexually assaulting a 15-year-old boy. It is simply unfathomable that Imran Ahmad Khan, the former MP for Wakefield who was convicted and jailed in May this year, has continued to be paid taxpayers' money while behind bars.

Khan was elected in December 2019 but an investigation by this newspaper revealed he was under scrutiny by police for almost the whole time he was an MP. Even so, during his three years in parliament he was able to claim more than half a million pounds in expenses, which included office costs and travel. Of that sum, just over £201,000 was paid after he was charged with sexual assault, almost £16,000 after he was convicted, and just over £14,000 after he was jailed. How can this have been allowed to happen?

MPs are entitled to claim for "winding up" costs for up to two months after they leave parliament. The rule is intended to cover costs, including staff pay, rent, office costs and removals. Khan certainly made the most of this. He claimed more than £8,500 on removals expenses, £4,000 of which was paid to a company often used by prime ministers when they move in and out of Downing Street. Other claims paid after Khan was jailed included a gas bill of almost £1,900 for his London home. He also received just under £2,000 for his office to be cleaned, and claimed for car mileage while his case was going through the courts. Extraordinary generosity towards a man convicted of a heinous crime.

> This scandal has the whiff of duck houses and moat cleaning

Khan should do the decent thing and pay back the money. Failing that, the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (Ipsa), the watchdog set up after the 2009 MPs' expenses scandal to oversee their costs, should pursue every avenue to recover it. If it fails, it suggests the rules need to be rewritten so taxpayers are not funding convicts.

Ipsa already appears out of touch with the public mood. Only this week it faced criticism and ridicule for ruling that MPs can claim money for their office Christmas parties. This has more than a whiff of the claims for duck houses and moat cleaning that justly earned them such opprobrium. Khan's pocketing of public money leaves a similar sense of disgust.

Jawad Iqbal is a freelance writer

Janice Turner Notebook

My CT scan peaked with a wee bit of weirdness

A strange business, my first CT scan. The machine was not in the main hospital but in a large silver van. "Welcome to my spaceship," said the young radiographer, and indeed the vehicle full of beeping, flashing panels looked capable of orbiting Mars.

Yet the inner chamber, where you lie in a halo-shaped device, was entirely covered in murals of mountain scenery — perhaps Mont Blanc — while on the ceiling was a frieze of scudding clouds. An arc of strip-lighting around the halo slowly changed colour from pink to blue to green.

"Relax!" it all cried. "You will be freaked out by this scary machine, but our soothing spa-vibe will distract you." I hadn't been nervous at all until I noticed how effortfully I was being reassured. Then a dye was injected into my vein. "You'll get a warm sensation all over your body," said the radiographer. "And you may think you've wet yourself. But don't worry, you haven't."

I replied I felt fine. "That was just the practice saline solution, now we're going for real." I stared up into the clouds as the lights of Mont Blanc turned pink then blue. OH! Oh God! How very weird …

Screen dream

Bradford Movie Makers is the last of the film clubs which were once in every northern town. Since 1932 its members have been making sci-fi, Hammer Horror pastiches or travelogues on Super 8 and now video, handing out their own annual awards.

But the Movie Makers is in decline, with only a dozen members, some in their eighties. The director Kim Hopkins follows them for three years in her documentary *A Bunch of Amateurs* as they fight to save their fading club.

The break-out star is Harry, a former professional magician who wants to recreate the opening corn-is-as-high-as-an-elephant's-eye sequence in *Oklahoma*, but can't sing and is too scared to sit on a horse.

It is a funny and uplifting documentary, a reminder of how physically coming together in a common pursuit still matters in the virtual age. Moreover, as the filmmaker Al Morrow noted at Aldeburgh documentary festival on Saturday, it is most remarkable in showing white, working class, elderly northerners, a group only portrayed on screen as bigots or buffoons, having artistic dreams too.



Short cut

'Life is too short to stuff a mushroom," was the dictum of Superwoman Shirley Conran. But is it too fleeting to chop an onion? A few years back, Nigella Lawson was scorned for using spring onions in her fast food TV series because cooking the regular sort was too time-consuming.

For ages, I've had a bag of frozen onions, recommended by a friend as a game-changer when making large quantities of stew or curry. But they sat unused, as I felt guilty about my indolence — and that frozen onions cost £2.40 per kilo rather than 65p raw. I finally used them this week — you just fry them from frozen! — and if, like me, you have blunt knives and poor chopping skills, they may become your guilty cooking secret too.

Award is truly limp

Surely the moment the Duke and Duchess of Sussex collect the prize for "moral courage" in challenging Harry's own family's alleged racism from the Robert F Kennedy human rights foundation, will be the point his brother and father cut all loving bonds. How could it not?

Besides, the Ripple of Hope award is such a risible name for a prize. It reminds me of mailshots I still receive from the porn industry after reporting on an adult movie convention years ago. They often advertise forthcoming awards, with categories including Milf Performer of the Year and Best Sex Lubricant. I foresee a special prize at the end of the night, for a porn performer who has overcome great adversity in pursuit of their craft. All stand for the 2022 winner of the Nipple of Hope.

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Brexit has grown sectarian: it's time for peace

The 'no surrender' gang of Tory MPs is preventing necessary progress on how to improve our relationship with the EU

Iain Martin

@IAINMARTIN1

There is an irony in bitter arguments over Brexit becoming so sectarian that the debate increasingly resembles old politics in Northern Ireland. Not only is the main sticking point in Britain's relationship with the European Union the Northern Ireland protocol, which gives Brussels oversight of trading relations with that part of the United Kingdom. The two sides in the Brexit wars, which rumble on, increasingly resemble the hardest hardliners on either side in Northern Ireland.

At Westminster, the conversation about the EU is still too often dominated by those on the extremes, a point demonstrated when a cabinet minister mused to The Sunday Times that the way to improve things is to be like Switzerland. The canny Swiss are not in the EU yet have a range of bilateral deals with Brussels. Be more Swiss, was the message.

Cue explosion. The "no surrender" Brexiteers of the ERG, the European Research Group of Tory MPs, denounced the anonymous intervention as traitorous backsliding on hallowed Brexit. It didn't seem to please Remainers either. There was no rush to endorse the call for a better deal.

Anyone suggesting compromise on Brexit has had the amusing experience of being denounced. I wrote in the summer that it was time to talk about fixing the problems, largely because of the impact on business investment. I hit send, went to Sweden and mostly kept my phone off for 72 hours. On re-emerging, there were many thousands of people shouting at me online. Fellow Leavers accused me of betrayal. Remainers said I had admitted Brexit was a disaster. I had done neither.

Advocates of never touching our deal are detached from reality

In the ERG universe there is delight this week because they have shot down the Swiss idea by getting Rishi Sunak to state Britain will never do such a deal. The prime minister has been compelled to recite the mantra by which Boris Johnson's Brexit deal is deemed sacrosanct.

This entire episode is, on all sides, a wearisome charade, as in the precise definition of an act for show or an event that is clearly false. Sunak voted for Brexit and is not going to sign a Swiss-style deal, even if such a thing existed, which it does not. Switzerland does not have a single deal with the EU. Attempts to engineer one have collapsed. Instead, there are numerous bilateral arrangements to facilitate trade and discussions that rumble on for decades.

But Britain could learn a lesson. Switzerland is shorthand for adopting a more realistic state of mind in the next few decades when dealing with a tricky EU. Rather than there being some great denouement, it will require many years of boring, sometimes annoying, often important diplomacy, settling arguments about trade facilitation and science co-operation.

In 2024 the UK-EU trade deal comes up for review. Labour has started to say it is for improvements, which is encouraging, and it may fall to a new government to adjust course. With voters complaining the benefits of Brexit have not turned up, the advocates of never touching the current deal sound increasingly detached from reality. As do hardline Remainers and Rejoiners, who say there were only ever two alternatives: membership of the EU or international pariah. Such rigidity borders on religious dogma.

The Ukraine war has made the fundamentalists look ridiculous. Brexit Britain has been among those, alongside Poland in the EU, who have done most with the US and Nato to aid Kyiv. On security, the UK is hardly behaving like an anti-European nation.

President Macron then produced a sensible idea, with the first meeting of the European Political Community, a security organisation recognising the need for co-operation with European nations not

Johnson talked in 2012 of Britzerland, an outer tier of co-operation

in the EU. Several years ago, such an initiative would have been unlikely to attract a British delegation. Britain joined the first meeting.

In that spirit, a gradual thawing should be possible. If not, if nothing can ever be improved short of adherence to one doctrine, what's the point of ever doing or trying anything?

It is not as though the high priests of pure Brexit, even those from different denominations, have never praised compromise. On the contrary. Boris Johnson talked in 2012 of Britzerland, calling for alliance with the Swiss to found a new "outer tier" of European co-operation. Switzerland, Nigel Farage observed in 2020, had been something of an inspiration for leaving. The Swiss managed to be a sovereign nation and still do bilateral deals with the EU, he told a Swiss TV station. Now he pledges to destroy the Tories when Switzerland is mentioned.

For me — and I acknowledge many others disagree — leaving the EU has always been a fundamental if abstract question of democratic accountability: disliking a transnational government it's impossible to kick out. When I see EU leaders staying up until 1am arguing, as they did earlier this year, with the Hungarian populist Viktor Orban over whether or not to be tough with Vladimir Putin, I'm pleased we're not a member of that club.

Still, there are all manner of ways to not be in the EU. Norway has its way, trading more freely than the UK does at present.

What is Britain's distinct way going to be a decade from now? Given the Johnson deal was the culmination of a (largely peaceful) civil war, and was produced by someone as notoriously inattentive to detail as Boris, how likely is it that today we have the optimum relationship with our EU neighbours? The answer: unlikely. That being so, surely it is sensible to start building bridges.

Letters to the Editor

Letters to the Editor should be sent to letters@thetimes.co.uk or by post to 1 London Bridge Street, London SE1 9GF

Independence day

Sir, That the Supreme Court has ruled against the Scottish parliament's right to hold a referendum on independence was to be expected. However legally correct that decision may have been, it makes clear that we are not dealing with a union of equals, as Scotland's status is more like that of a colony, requiring the permission of its overlord to decide if it wishes to even express an opinion as to whether it wishes to remain a member of that union. If a majority of Scottish MPs returned to Westminster at the next general election demand either independence or a referendum on independence, would that be considered a legitimate route forward, or would they be swatted aside by the English majority? Either it is a voluntary union of equals or it is not. At present it seems fairly clear that the answer is that it is not.
Michael Collie
Dunfermline, Fife

Sir, Now that the Supreme Court has given its unanimous verdict, can we return to the days when the devolved administration tackled the problems — and there are certainly plenty of those — that plague Scotland, and put away the infantile, unwinnable and never-ending grievances?
Alexander McKay
Edinburgh

Sir, I fail to see how Nicola Sturgeon, faced with a definitive ruling by the Supreme Court, can keep banging the drum for independence. She should abide by the 2014 referendum, and stop the tail wagging the dog.
Alan Howes
Ambleside, Cumbria

Kudos for teachers

Sir, Men do not want to be teachers because saying "I want to be a teacher" has no "Wow!" factor at all. Brilliant teaching brings success for pupils but the teacher is considered incidental and is rarely named. Moreover, if you are good at teaching you are rapidly promoted to school management positions, which pay better and maybe include a little stardust, but — crucially — take you out of the classroom.
Hilary Moriarty
Former teacher, head of department, head of sixth form, deputy head, headmistress and CEO of the Boarding Schools' Association

Corrections and clarifications

● We wrongly described Sahran Abeysundara as the owner of The Silkroad, an interior design company in Haslemere, Surrey (Autumn statement, Nov 18). Mr Abeysundara is an interior designer for the company. We apologise for the confusion.

We are committed to abiding by the Independent Press Standards Organisation rules and regulations and the Editors' Code of Practice that IPSO enforces. Requests for corrections should be sent to feedback@thetimes.co.uk

Case for urgent change within the Tory party

Sir, In a perfect world the Conservatives would take Daniel Finkelstein's advice and make any changes they needed now rather than waiting until they go into opposition ("Tories should act as if they've already lost", Nov 23). But history suggests that the odds of them doing so are low. My own work on the extent and the drivers of change since 1945 makes it clear that the Tories nearly always change more in opposition than they do in government.

Policy, admittedly, is more prone to change in office, partly because ministers have little choice but to respond to circumstances. But organisational change, and changes in the kind of people who represent and lead the party, are significantly more common in opposition. Moreover, defeat, while by no means the only driver of change, is still a big one. So, too, is leadership. A new broom sweeps clean. Rishi Sunak may be a new PM, but he is no new broom.
Tim Bale
Professor of politics, QMUL; author of *The Conservatives Since 1945*

Sir, Daniel Finkelstein's article suggesting that the Conservatives should begin their soul searching now brought to mind the long miles put in by Charles Clarke, John Reid, John Newbiggin and others for Labour in the late 1970s and into the 1980s with Neil Kinnock, well before Tony Blair took Labour back to power in 1997. One wonders if the Conservatives have thinkers and doers of the same calibre.
Alastair Stewart
TV newscaster, Bramdean, Hants

Sir, Daniel Finkelstein suggests the Tories start thinking now about how they need to change. No doubt he is right. But on Brexit he suggests the Tories will not address the issue because they are too divided to do anything else. This will remain their Achilles' heel, and the sooner the leadership comes to terms with this truth, the better for them and, more importantly, the country. The only way forward is to recognise the irreconcilable differences between the ERG and the more moderate core of the party, and to focus on creating a more forward-looking "New Conservative" grouping, one not afraid to recognise the damage that several years of in-fighting and Europe-bashing have wreaked.
George Kingston
Sutton-under-Brailes, Oxon

Sir, Daniel Finkelstein rightly pinpoints the need for the Conservative Party to regain its appeal to a wider section of the electorate. Time and again, elections have shown that the majority of British voters are essentially centrist in their views and do not trust extremist politicians. Sir Keir Starmer has shown that he understands this by rooting out hard-left elements in his party. Rishi Sunak needs to have the courage to do the same with his extreme right-wing factions if the Conservatives are ever to appeal to the broader electorate again.
John Grossman
Northwood, Middx

Sir, Daniel Finkelstein makes a convincing case for the Conservatives to apologise for their failures while still in power. In particular he cites the ethical failings of the Johnson administration and a spectacular lapse of financial control under Liz Truss. However, this would require Johnson and Truss to offer an unequivocal apology to the electorate for the error of their ways. To my knowledge neither has yet done so.
Professor Ian Kunkler
Edinburgh

Gambling addiction

Sir, Your reports (news, Nov 23) on the big increase in gambling addiction highlights a problem that will get much worse very quickly unless action is taken immediately. The adverts during most major sporting events on commercial TV channels are dominated by betting companies, and usually show people enjoying their winnings. Millions of children watch these sporting events, and hence these adverts, and are thus exposed to the lure of a quick win; they are never shown the "losers" and the devastation that gambling can bring to families.

The government should act without any further delay to ban all advertising by betting companies, and our sporting associations should ban such advertising at stadiums and on sports clothing. It took far too long to impose a ban on tobacco advertising. We need to help those with a gambling addiction now, not at some unspecified time in the future, and we must prevent the next generation from acquiring such an addiction.
John Shanley
Ashtead, Surrey

Warehouse 'slaves'

Sir, Further to your investigation into working conditions at the fashion giant Boohoo (Nov 23), I have endured two spells of employment at a warehouse while in the security industry. Both companies were motivated by the premise that warehouse staff would steal stock. At the second establishment we were required to check the tops of employees, as well as their underwear and socks, to ensure they were not wearing garments that had been stolen. There were constant snap checks on management desks and employees' pockets, and airport-style metal detection sensors when entering and leaving the fragrance/cosmetics area. Most people were agency staff, and even the agencies' management were not above suspicion. A very bad experience prompted solely by the desire to earn a salary.
Ian King
Hipperholme, W Yorks

Letters to The Times must be exclusive and may be edited. Please include a full address and daytime telephone number.

Handle on Handel

Sir, Michael Mannix asks if he is alone (letter, Nov 23) in regarding the *Messiah* as one of Handel's dullest works. I think he probably is. Why would such a "dull" composition be recorded nearly 250 times and have attracted the attention of Mozart?
Nicholas Oppenheim
London SW6

Sir, Michael Mannix is not alone: the *Messiah* is dull. *Arrival of the Queen of Sheba*, on the other hand, is so lively that I have it as my mobile ringtone. I actually look forward to incoming calls in spite of odd looks in Waitrose.
Jenny Wright
Richmond, Surrey

Meet the parents

Sir, Further to your report "America's angst at addressing in-laws" (Nov 23), when our American son-in-law joined our family he addressed me as "Sir". I asked him to call me Tim. I have since been elevated to "Sir Tim".
Tim Simon
London NW1

WORKLESS MARCHERS' ULTIMATUM

FROM THE TIMES NOVEMBER 24, 1922

As a result of the Prime Minister's refusal to receive a deputation from the unemployed marchers, the National Unemployed Workers' Committee has issued a manifesto appealing for reinforcements:
Dear Comrades, Our movement is engaged in a terrific struggle against the forces of reaction and suppression. The Premier has refused to grant an interview to the deputation and, as a result of his high-handed attitude, the marchers have decided to remain in London until he condescends to receive their elected representatives. In order to keep the pressure up it is imperative that reinforcements of provincial men should take the road to London. Therefore, comrades immediately get on with the following work: (1) Call a mass meeting of employed and unemployed in your locality; get a resolution passed that a letter or telegram be sent from the meeting to the Prime Minister demanding that the hunger-marchers be granted an interview. (2) Get all trade union branches to send a similar demand. (3) Get the Councils of Action to carry on local activities. (4) Ascertain the number of men who are prepared to march to London as reinforcements, and get them started as soon as possible. (5) Send in daily reports to the National Organizer whilst on the road. It does not matter which way or how you get here, as long as you do get here. When you are in London your maintenance and accommodation must rest with the local authorities here. Hardships will be entailed, but the fight now on fully warrants the facing of those hardships. Let no man start out who imagines it is going to be a milk-and-honey expedition. (6) Get machinery in motion to ensure that dependents of the marchers shall not suffer from the breadwinner getting into the fighting-line. Pick the best you have, and head for London right away. Remember the gallant two thousand already here. Don't let them down after they have put up such a great fight on your behalf. They call for reinforcements from you. Respond to that call like comrades in arms and we shall emerge triumphant. Forward the unemployed army! All roads lead to London!
Yours in the struggle, Wal Hannington, National Organizer,
P Haye, National Secretary.

THETIMES.CO.UK/ARCHIVE

Ukraine's heritage

Sir, We urge all those concerned with cultural heritage to support President Zelensky's campaign to protect the historic buildings, avenues and courtyards of Odesa by applying to have the city centre declared a World Heritage Site. Unesco has mobilised experts to support Ukraine so that the nomination can be examined urgently by World Heritage Committee member states.

The economic effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the suffering of its people, can lead us to overlook the shocking damage to buildings, monuments, churches, archives, and museum and art collections across the country — all now at further risk from weakened infrastructure and the approach of winter. More must be done to record and protect monuments in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Chernihiv, Mykolayiv and other cities; to catalogue museum losses in Kherson and Melitopil; and document the destruction of archaeological sites. Ukraine's exhausted heritage and cultural professionals also need our support. But we should begin by protecting the historically outstanding city of Odesa.
David Adshead, director, Georgian Group; **Henrietta Billings**, director, SAVE Europe's Heritage; **James Bridge**, CEO, Unesco UK; **Oliver Caroe**, Surveyor to St Paul's Cathedral
Plus a further 18 signatories at thetimes.co.uk/letters

Volley and the Ivy

Sir, Patrick Kidd's Thunderer (Nov 23) about the suggested moving of carol services by the Church of England to accommodate the World Cup misses the point. Carols should be sung in Christmas-tide, not Advent-tide, be that on a Saturday or Sunday. Keep carols for Christmas.
The Rev Dr James M Cassidy
Sacred Heart Church, Luton

Mind our language

Sir, Giles Coren hits the mark regarding his podcasts (Notebook, Nov 22). Other regional dialects also offer rich seams to mine, such as Ulster Scots, which yields many delightful moments. A board meeting is "a hooley for the high headyins" and the school (comedy) play "a session with the wee dafties".
Ian Elliott
Belfast

This spells trouble

Sir, The English Spelling Society has failed to grasp a fundamental flaw in its plan to reform English spelling (report, Nov 23). Its system tries to represent sounds, as in wash becoming "wosh". This takes no account of regional variations in pronunciation. Love could become "luv" in lots of places, but in Huddersfield it would need to be "lov", and blue in Barnsley would not be "bloo" but "blew". I am sure the same would apply for certain words throughout the British Isles.
Peter J Robinson
Wakefield, W Yorks

Sir, The Church of England's liturgy committees, like the English Spelling Society, sometimes seem unaware of regional differences in pronunciation. The phrase "preserve our souls and bodies" sounds less than reverent when intoned by those of us who pronounce "our" as "ar".
The Rev Janet Fife
Whitby, N Yorks

Daily Universal Register

UK: Mark Harper, the transport secretary, meets Mick Lynch, RMT union leader, over planned strikes; Royal Mail staff go on strike.
US: Thanksgiving Day national holiday.

Nature notes



As Ben Stokes, the England cricket captain, hit a single through mid-wicket to win the T20 World Cup, a billion humans were watching — and about a dozen seagulls. Players at the Melbourne Cricket Ground have often had to share the limelight with the inquisitive silver gull (*Chroicocephalus novaehollandiae*), but during the T20 final these beautiful birds stole the show, flapping through fielders and even flashing over the stumps. One MCG silver gull has become famous. Struck by a ball in a match earlier this month, it was thought to be dead, only to rise up and chase a fielder. The bird is known as Umar, after Pakistan's great bowler Umar Gul. JONATHAN TULLOCH

Birthdays today



Sir Billy Connolly, *pictured*, comedian, actor, *Mrs Brown* (1997), and writer, *Windswept & Interesting: My Autobiography* (2021), 80; **Prof Sir Michael Barber**, educationist, chairman, Somerset County Cricket Club, chancellor, University of Exeter, 67; **Pete Best**, the original drummer for the Beatles (1960-62), 81; **Lord (Ian) Botham**, cricketer, England (1977-92), chairman, Durham County Cricket Club, cricket commentator, prime minister's trade envoy to Australia, 67; **Lord (Ewen) Cameron of Dillington**, landowner in Somerset, chairman, Countryside Agency (1999-2004), 73; **Willy Claes**, politician, secretary-general of Nato (1994-95), 84; **Prof Dame Sally Davies**, UK special envoy on antimicrobial resistance, chief medical officer for England (2010-19), 73; **Gregory Doran**, artistic director, Royal Shakespeare Company (2012-Apr 2022, now emeritus), 64; **Christine Jardine**, Liberal Democrat MP for Edinburgh West, 62; **Prof Sir Bruce Keogh**, cardiothoracic surgeon, national medical director, NHS England (2012-17), 68; **General Sir Richard Lawson**, DSO, commander-in-chief, Allied Forces Northern Europe (1982-86), 95; **James Spencer-Churchill, Duke of Marlborough**, 67; **Alejandro Mayorkas**, US secretary of homeland security, 63; **Stephen Merchant**, comedian, actor and co-creator of *The Office* (2001-03), *The Outlaws* (2021-22), 48; **Najib Mikati**, prime minister of Lebanon, 67; **Sean O'Loughlin**, rugby league player, former England and Wigan Warriors captain, 40; **Graham Price**, rugby union player, Wales (1975-83), 71; **Arundhati Roy**, human rights activist and author, *The God of Small Things* (1997, Man Booker prizewinner), *Azadi: Freedom. Fascism. Fiction* (2020), 61; **Alyn Shipton**, writer, broadcaster and jazz historian, *On Jazz: A Personal Journey* (2021), 69; **John Squire**, guitarist and songwriter, Stone Roses, and painter, 60; **Edward Stourton**, presenter of the *Sunday* programme on BBC Radio 4, 65; **Russell Watson**, tenor, 56.

On this day

In **1689** the Swiss surgeon Johannes Fatio began what was to be the first recorded successful separation of conjoined twins.

The last word

"Time is still the best critic, and patience the best teacher." Frédéric Chopin, Polish pianist and composer, quoted in *Chopin: Pianist and Teacher: As Seen By His Pupils* (1970)

Without Exits

In ending Nicola Sturgeon's doomed bid for a second referendum, the Supreme Court has exposed the SNP's record of failure

It was Tam Dalyell, the maverick Labour MP, who warned that devolution was "a motorway without exits to independence". That the Scottish National Party continues to escape the usual laws of political gravity despite 15 long years of misrule at Holyrood may give casual observers south of the border the impression that he was right. With the Supreme Court ruling that Nicola Sturgeon has no power to legislate for a second independence referendum, however, it is the nationalists who are ensnared in a constitutional trap of their own making. It has been a great week for the Union.

The Supreme Court's ruling yesterday exposes and reaffirms two longstanding but neglected truths of British politics. The first is that Holyrood was not created as Westminster's equal. Constitutional matters were never devolved to the Scottish parliament. As such the court was bound to dismiss the claim by Ms Sturgeon's government that it had the power to hold a referendum without the consent of ministers in London. To argue that a unilateral plebiscite would not have destroyed the delicate constitutional balance on which the good governance of the United Kingdom depends, as the SNP did, was self-evidently absurd.

That much, of course, Ms Sturgeon knew already. She now proposes to take her litigation to the country. Denied a *de jure* referendum, she has vowed to turn the next general election into a *de facto* vote on independence. In doing so she merely draws attention to a second truth that the SNP would rather its electorate ignored: nationalist government has been a disaster for the people of Scotland. Its health service is in crisis. Its schools, once the envy of these islands, have declined to the extent that literacy and numeracy rates are among the worst in Europe. Its nationalised ferry service has been crippled by a four-year, £250 million delay to the delivery of two ships built at a publicly-owned Clyde shipyard.

On and on the litany of avoidable failure goes. Yesterday the United Nations condemned Ms Sturgeon's rushed and contentious reforms to gender-recognition legislation as a danger to women. The number of sex offences recorded by police has more than doubled in the past decade. Scotland's government is failing its people. For Ms Sturgeon to suggest that independence is the solution to this catalogue of self-inflicted crises is an insult, as is her entreaty to voters to cast their ballots in 2024 on the constitutional question alone. The Scottish electorate has every right to judge the SNP on its threadbare record of delivery, rather than its confected grievances.

And so indeed they will. Ms Sturgeon's plan B is a non-starter. Neither the government nor opposition will indulge it. Indeed, should the Labour Party's existing poll lead endure, Scots opposed to another term of Conservative government need not reward the SNP for failure at the next general election. With so little to show for her own eight years as first minister and with one eye on her own retirement, Ms Sturgeon argues from a position of profound weakness — not least as no recent survey of voters shows anything like a comfortable majority for a referendum or independence.

The coming months may further weaken the first minister. Her party, as so often with nationalist movements, is an uneasy coalition between gradualists and fundamentalists. That Ms Sturgeon and her ministers affirmed their respect for the verdict, and with it the Supreme Court's jurisdiction in Scotland, in the hours after the ruling was welcome. But their followers are unlikely to pay similar heed to the rule of law as long as the SNP's leadership persists with the fiction that there is another route to secession. They should instead recognise, if only belatedly, that unionism has won the day, and work constructively with Westminster. From this uncomfortable reality Ms Sturgeon is without exits.

Bad Bet

The NHS should not have to bear the cost of gambling addiction

There was a time when betting was considered such a harmful vice that bookmakers were barred from opening on high streets, had to darken their windows and were forbidden from marketing themselves. It was not until 1986 that they were allowed to sell drinks, paint their walls or install seats and televisions. Today gambling is ubiquitous, not just on high streets but everywhere and anywhere via smartphones, which provide round the clock access to betting opportunities, while bookmakers lure punters via advertisements plastered over football shirts and on the television. The result is not just a personal calamity for the vast and growing numbers of gambling addicts, but a societal crisis too.

As The Times reported yesterday, the NHS is increasingly having to pick up the tab for the rise in problem gambling. Doctors complain of a surge in suicidal "young men in football shirts" turning up at A&E departments after losing all their money in online gaming sprees. In response, the health service has this week opened two new specialist clinics in Southampton and Stoke, adding to a network of five commissioned in 2019. These will offer addiction therapy, including medication usually given to opioid users to reduce cravings.

Of course, the NHS has little option but to try to help these addicts recover in the same way that it would respond to any other public health crisis. But the cost of tackling this epidemic of addiction is one that the NHS could do without. Demand for places at the clinics is soaring, with 599 patients referred in the past six months, a 42 per cent rise on the same period last year. There are an estimated 2.2 million people who are problem gamblers or at risk of addiction in Britain, the majority men in their thirties, and there are more than 400 gambling-related suicides every year.

Nonetheless, the NHS can only tackle the symptoms of this crisis, not the cause. That is the responsibility of the government. Yet planned reforms to the gambling laws, first promised in 2020, have now been delayed four times, most recently this summer. Among the changes that campaigners are demanding are a ban on betting logos on football shirts, restrictions on bookmaker ads on television, an industry fund to contribute to the cost of treating addiction, stricter checks on customers, including age verification and sharing of data with other bookmakers on problem gamblers, and a clampdown on VIP packages involving free bets, enhanced odds and hospitality used to induce regular customers to spend more.

The government should delay no more. It is not nanny-statism to try to limit the damage caused by an activity that costs the state many millions of pounds a year. If the industry cannot take greater responsibility for the health of its customers, and public health more widely, beyond its pledge of £100 million to fund research and education, the state has a duty to intervene.

The danger is that instead, the World Cup will provide bookmakers with an opportunity to lure in many more punters, some of whom will become tomorrow's addicts. Viewers are being bombarded with advertisements for gambling websites, while the rise in in-play betting means that the opportunities to bet during a match on anything from who will score the next goal to which side will be awarded the next penalty are continuous. No one should be denied an innocent flutter, but the NHS should not have to bear the cost of society's bad bet.

Loneliness of the Long-distance Grandma

Contact with children helps to reduce isolation

During the pandemic it became commonplace to see, hear or read of a grandparent longing for the moment when they could hug their grandchildren once again. A scientific study has now confirmed just how emotionally positive and life-enhancing such contact between the generations can be.

The study looked at research into the link between loneliness in older people and the type of unpaid caring they did. Those looking after a partner in poor health were likely to feel socially disconnected. Those who looked after children were far less prone to feeling isolated, as were older people who volunteered for charitable causes. Loneliness can lead to a higher risk of heart disease, high blood pressure and obesity. Those locked-down grannies knew instinctively what was good for them.

Loneliness among the elderly is a tragic, yet relatively recent and by no means inevitable side effect of geographical mobility and decades of spectacular medical success in extending life. The issue needs to be addressed, both by the state and also by dutiful grandchildren, compassionate neighbours, befriending schemes and other community initiatives. Cross-generational contact is rewarding physically and psychologically for individuals, and socially binding for the country. It is especially important to facilitate such contact as we move towards the festive season, although Mick Lynch's announcement of Christmas rail-union strikes won't make this any easier.

The notion of a time when all children grew up living next door to granny is a myth. Life expectancy in Britain is 23 years longer than 100 years ago. Then, a child's life was unlikely to overlap with that of their grandparents for long, whereas today, sharing a significant amount of the same lifespan is the norm. The golden age of the grandparent is now. We should make the most of it.

World

Lights go out across Ukraine as Putin's missiles rain down

Ukraine
Marc Bennetts
Richard Lloyd Parry Kherson

Huge areas of Ukraine and neighbouring Moldova were plunged into darkness after Russia began a new wave of missile attacks on energy infrastructure, leaving millions of people without heating and running water.

Kyiv, the capital, was hit by a blackout, while the surrounding region lost power entirely. The Odesa region, on the Black Sea, and the Chernihiv region in northern Ukraine were also without power, as was Lviv, a city on the border with Poland.

More than two thirds of Ukraine's 24 regions reported blackouts.

Six people, including a 17-year-old girl, were killed nationwide. The Kremlin had fired almost 70 cruise missiles, officials said. More than 50 were shot down, Valeriy Zaluzhniy, Ukraine's top general, said.

Kyiv, which had a prewar population of almost three million, was without water supplies as a result of the attacks, the mayor's office said.

President Zelensky appealed to the United Nations security council to take action. "Today is just one day, but we have received 70 missiles. That's the Russian formula of terror," Zelensky said via videolink to the council chamber in New York. Ukraine was waiting to see "a very firm reaction" from the world to the airstrikes, he added.

The council is unlikely to act since Russia is a member with veto power. Zelensky called for Russia to be denied a vote on any decision concerning its actions. "We cannot be hostage to one international terrorist," he said. "Russia is doing everything to make an energy generator a more powerful tool than the UN charter."

Vasily Nebenzya, Russia's UN ambassador, complained it was against council rules for Zelensky to appear via video and rejected what he called "reckless threats and ultimatums" by Ukraine and its supporters in the West. Nebenzya said damage to Ukraine's infrastructure had been caused by air defence missiles that had hit civilian areas after being fired at Russia's missiles and he called on the West to stop providing them to Ukraine.

Officials in Moldova reported a "massive" blackout that affected around half the country, including Chisinau, the capital. The former Soviet state, which shares its power grid with Ukraine, said it was summoning the Russian ambassador. President Sandu, its pro-western leader, said: "Russia left Moldova in the dark."

The mayor of Lviv said the city of 700,000 people had been left without power amid temperatures of 1C. "The entire city is without light," Andriy Sadoviy said. He urged people to remain in bomb shelters. The power units of three Ukrainian nuclear power plants had been switched off as an emergency measure during the strikes, Energoatom, the state-run nuclear energy company, said.

Units had been turned off at the Rivne, Pivdennoukrainsk and Khmelnytskyi plants in southern and western Ukraine. Relentless missile strikes have destroyed about half of Ukraine's energy system ahead of winter, when temperatures can drop to minus 20C.

Vitali Klitschko, the mayor of Kyiv, has warned that the Ukrainian capital is set to face its "worst winter since the Second World War". The first snow fell in the city on November 17 after weeks of unseasonably warm weather. "We must prepare for the worst scenario," the former world heavyweight boxing champion told the German newspaper Bild. "That would be if there were a widespread power failure and the temperatures were even colder. Then parts of the city would have to be evacuated, but we don't want it to come to that."

Zelensky said more than 4,000 "invincibility points" across Ukraine would provide basic facilities such as light, heat and internet free, around the clock. The centres will be in administrative buildings or schools.

On the outskirts of the city of Kherson, from which Russian forces withdrew across the Dnipro river 12 days ago, an intense artillery battle continued yesterday. Russian forces that have retreated to the east, or left, bank continued to engage with Ukrainian forces. Explosions could be heard throughout the day, although there were no early reports of civilian casualties.

The military authorities in the city are pleading with the 100,000 citizens who remain to leave as soon as possible. "The Kherson defence forces insist people should leave because the Russians will intensify the shelling," Captain Dmytro Pletenthuk, a military spokesman, said. "We've seen an artillery duel going on for the whole day. The Russians are on the left bank of the river with artillery and machineguns.

"Civilians cannot help the armed forces. They are just a burden on medical and logistical resources."

Yesterday's missile attacks came soon after the European parliament voted to designate Russia as a "state sponsor of terrorism". Dmytro Kuleba, the Ukrainian foreign minister, accused Russia of "celebrating" terrorist status with new "missile terror".

A newborn baby was killed when Russian missiles hit a maternity ward in Vilniansk, a city in Zaporizhzhya. The child's mother and a doctor were rescued. "Grief fills our hearts. A baby who has just appeared in the world has been killed," Oleksandr Starukh, the regional governor, said. Olena Zelenska, Ukraine's first lady, said: "Horrible pain. We will never forget and never forgive."

EFREM LUKATSKY/AP



Firefighters at Vyshhorod, near Kyiv, one of many areas hit by Russia yesterday





Shape shifting A vast shoal of tiny fish

Red card for Orban over 'Greater Hungary' scarf

Hungary
David Crossland

Hungary's prime minister has angered his country's neighbours by wearing a scarf featuring a map of pre-First World War "Greater Hungary", including parts of Austria, Slovakia, Romania, Croatia and Ukraine.

Romania voiced "firm disapproval" of Viktor Orban's football scarf and Ukraine demanded an official apology. Romania's foreign ministry said "any revisionist manifestation, regardless of the form it takes, is unacceptable, contrary to the current realities and commitments undertaken jointly by Romania and Hungary".

A Ukrainian foreign ministry spokesman said Kyiv was summoning Hungary's ambassador, "who will be informed of the unacceptability of Viktor Orban's act … The promotion of revisionist ideas in Hungary does not contribute to the development of Ukrainian-Hungarian relations."

Orban's Facebook page has a video showing the nationalist leader greeting Hungarian footballers while wearing the scarf after a match with Greece on Sunday.

About 1.2 million ethnic Hungarians live in Romania and 150,000 in western Ukraine. It is not the first time Orban has caused tension by referring to Greater Hungary. In 2020 he posted a photograph of a globe that showed the borders of the Hungarian kingdom before the end of the First World War.

Hungary lost large parts of its territory in the 1920 Treaty of Trianon after Austria-Hungary's defeat in the First World War. Hungary was reduced to less than 30 per cent of its prewar size, with its population cut to 7.6 million from 20.9 million. The treaty is regarded as a humiliation by nationalists.

On Facebook Orban said the Hungarian national team was "the team of all Hungarians wherever they live", adding: "Football is not politics. Let's not see what is not there."

He has been criticised in the European Union for curbing media freedom and the rights of minorities. He and President Putin are longstanding allies and have similar stances on gay rights, gender and Islam.

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, the German newspaper, said Orban had been playing with revisionist symbols for a long time. "When the neighbours are outraged, Budapest pretends to be astonished and innocent, claiming it is only a representation of a past state of affairs and has nothing to do with today's politics," it said. "That is a hypocritical lie."



Viktor Orban has been accused of revisionism

Biden pleads

United States
Hugh Tomlinson Washington

President Biden urged Americans to "come together … to stand against" gun violence yesterday, after a man shot dead six people before killing himself at a Walmart supermarket in Virginia.

Police said a store manager opened fire on staff with a pistol in the city of Chesapeake at 10.12pm on Tuesday.

"I looked up and my manager just opened fire," Briana Tyler, an employee, told ABC's *Good Morning America*. "He wasn't aiming at anybody specifically. He just started shooting throughout the entire break room. He looked directly at me but luckily he missed."

Kevin Harper, another employee,

Riots break out at world's largest iPhone factory
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Republicans aim to ease path to power for DeSantis
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DANIEL BROWNE/MEDIADRUMIMAGES



turns as if by magic from a giant wall into an amorphous mass as this diver approaches off Busselton, Western Australia

Murders expose sex trafficking in Rome's suburbs

Italy

Tom Kington Rome

The murder of three prostitutes has lifted the lid on a world of foreign sex workers forced to work in apartments in affluent areas of Rome.

Two Chinese prostitutes were murdered last week in a flat in Via Riboty in the Prati district, allegedly by a mobster with a history of violence who stabbed a Colombian prostitute minutes later at a nearby apartment building.

Police arrested Giandavide De Pau, a reported drug user previously accused of assaulting prostitutes who has been a driver for Michele "Crazy" Senese, the Neapolitan mafia boss considered a major player in Rome's drug business.

Investigators believe De Pau, 51, sought refuge with Marta Castaño Torres in nearby Via Durazzo after killing the Chinese women, then stabbed her when she refused to take him in. He then hid out with a Cuban prostitute before his sister gave him up to police.

Italy's amazement that an underworld figure had apparently become a mass murderer combined with shock that the Chinese women were working in a building of lawyers' offices, yards from Rome's central court while Castaño Torres was seeing clients in a building full of middle-class families.

Francesco Carchedi, an academic who has studied the growing number of prostitutes working out of apartments in Rome, said he was not surprised. He claimed there were 1,500 Chinese sex workers based in 600 flats and 80 massage parlours in the city.

"They are often brought in to Italy by criminal groups on a bus from Turkey and get a day visa to go to Venice then vanish," said Carchedi, a social sciences professor at Rome's La Sapienza University. "The gangs then take their passport and make them work off a debt of up to €15,000 for the trip from China. They get to keep about half their earnings, but they are nevertheless basically slaves," he added.

The Chinese were moving from street prostitution to working in apartments, a trend evident among Italy's 50,000 total sex workers, said Carchedi. Since 2017 the number of apartment based prostitutes had risen from about 12,000 to 30,000, he said, with the remainder on the street.

Neighbours of the murdered prostitutes said they had no idea the women were plying their trade in their flats, although one mother living above Castaño Torres told The Times she had seen a stream of well-dressed men heading for her apartment. "They looked like family men, husbands, and they didn't seem to care about the TV cameras everywhere here," she said.

Italian newspapers have speculated that the murdered women had set up shop near the courts because of lawyers looking for sex during their lunch breaks. That provoked an angry reaction from Antonino Galletti, the head of the Rome guild of lawyers, who said his members were too busy. "I imagine there were journalists, magistrates, shopkeepers and labourers among the clients," he said.

Proof the Chinese women met high-brow clients came when the Rome novelist Patrizio Bati readily admitted he had been a regular customer at Via Riboty and recalled the women wearing slippers to avoid disturbing the downstairs neighbours.

His willingness to discuss the visits echoed an effort by an Italian website, Escort Advisor, to proudly promote its activities and describe itself as a Tripadvisor for prostitutes.

In 2020, the site enrolled the art critic Vittorio Sgarbi — now a junior culture minister in Giorgia Meloni's government — to give lectures on the site about the history of nudes in art.

Under Italian law, selling sex is legal, but pimping is not, and one expert said he suspected pimps were behind a lot of the women advertising sex online. "Are these women placing the ads on these sites, or is someone doing for them?" asked Fabio Sorgoni, the head of anti-trafficking at the charity On the Road.

for gun control after Walmart shooting

said in a Facebook video that he had left the room when the gunman "started cappin' people". He confirmed that the gunman had shot himself.

Harper said he and his colleagues had recently watched an active shooter training video, but the suddenness of the incident gave them no time to react. "That man a coward," he said. "You kill people ain't did nothing to you."

The attack happened two days before Thanksgiving, one of the biggest holidays on the American calendar, which is celebrated today.

It also followed a mass shooting at an LGBT nightclub in Colorado on Saturday night in which Anderson Lee Aldrich is accused of killing five people and injuring 17. He is to remain in custody without bond after a court appearance over video yesterday. He appeared slumped in a chair behind two lawyers.

The latest attacks mean the United Stated has passed 600 annual mass shootings for the third year in a row.

Biden spoke of his grief for those in Chesapeake and urged Americans to take a stand against gun violence. "Because of yet another horrific and senseless act of violence, there are now even more tables across the country that will have empty seats this Thanksgiving," he said. "We mourn for all those across America who have lost loved ones to these tragic shootings that we must come together as a nation to stand against."



Anderson Lee Aldrich, was slumped behind lawyers at a hearing on video

This year Biden signed the first piece of significant gun control legislation for 30 years after nationwide outrage at the murder of children and teachers at a school in Texas. The law was pared back by opposition from many Republicans and Biden admitted yesterday that it was "not nearly enough", saying: "We must take greater action."

Butter bargain hunters just can't believe it's not dearer

Hugh Tomlinson Washington

One thing bargain-hunters such as Laura Magone have to be grateful for this Thanksgiving is Aldi's knockdown butter promotion.

As moderator of the Wedding Cookie Table Community on Facebook, Magone was as excited as her 111,000 members when she learnt that the budget supermarket had cut the price of butter on the eve of the holiday season.

"Everyone was abuzz," Magone told The Wall Street Journal.

Queues and bulk-buying were reported in several towns as news of the price cut spread before the Thanksgiving holiday today, which heralds peak baking season. The price of butter rose to almost $5 per lb in August; Aldi has reduced this to $2.49 per lb.

The supermarket sought to impose a limit of 6lb of butter per shopper, but baking enthusiasts shared advice on how to get around the restriction. Several posted photos of fridge shelves piled high with sticks of butter. "Took three buddies and got 24lb," one posted.

Shariann Hall, of Canfield, Ohio, said she had started stocking up on butter in September until she peaked at 20lb in her fridge. "My nephew calls my house the house of 2,000 cookies," she said.

Riots break out at iPhone factory

China
Didi Tang Beijing

Riots broke out at the world's largest iPhone factory in central China yesterday as newly recruited workers clashed with police and security guards.

Videos circulating online showed crowds of staff chanting "fight, fight, fight" and "defend our rights" while pushing past barricades and guards in full-body protective suits.

The massive Foxconn factory in Zhengzhou employs 200,000 people to make Apple smartphones, including the latest iPhone 14 Pro. Last month, thousands of workers deserted the plant after a coronavirus outbreak left them fearing they would be trapped at the facility under China's strict zero-Covid quarantine policies.

In the latest protests, new workers were said to have rebelled over their contracts and continuing concerns over infection control measures at the factory. Videos of the riots showed protesters engaged in violent scuffles and rocking a police car.

One man was filmed lying on the ground being beaten by security officers, while another had blood streaming from his head. Workers were seen smashing surveillance cameras and windows with sticks. Police were filmed firing tear gas and water cannons and workers were heard saying they had been trapped in the factory. The protests appeared to have lasted throughout the night and into yesterday morning.

The plant is a critical part of Apple's supply chain, making half of the world's iPhones and up to 85 per cent of iPhone 14 Pros. It is believed to be one of the few facilities equipped to make the high-end models, which cost about £1,100.

As production was disrupted by the staff shortages, Foxconn tried to employ 100,000 new workers, promising generous wages and calling on former soldiers and Communist Party officials to perform a civic duty. However, new recruits said the labour contract was not what had been promised. Online posts suggest the terms were changed to make it more difficult to get a retention bonus. Many were said to be upset that they had to live and work alongside the plant's existing staff, who are perceived as potential virus carriers.

In one video, a worker accused the government of colluding with capitalists to exploit workers.

"They changed the contract so that we could not get the subsidy as they had promised. They quarantine us but don't provide food," another worker said. "If they do not address our needs, we will keep fighting."

Foxconn said it had fulfilled its payment contracts and that reports of infected staff living on campus with new recruits were untrue. A source said production at the plant was unaffected and output remained normal.

A notice by Foxconn's labour management team blamed the riots on delays in getting new recruits to work and said the factory would correct the work schedule to count the days when a worker was undergoing mandatory quarantine.

"After about 400 to 500 workers arrived here, the work environment was not prepared and they could not report to work in a timely manner," the notice said, citing conclusions by a government work team. "They became emotionally agitated after long waits and some became irrational and even broke the law."

The protests came as Covid cases increase across China, despite Beijing's zero-tolerance policy, which forces millions to undergo mass testing and imposes strict isolation measures if any cases are confirmed. Nearly 30,000 new cases were reported on Monday. Beijing recorded nearly 1,500 cases overnight and increased its infection control policy — a negative PCR test result within 48 hours is now required to enter public venues in the capital.

On Sunday health officials acknowledged the first deaths linked to Covid for six months in Beijing and forced parts of the city back into lockdown.





Twitter images showed protesters lying on the floor and being kicked by police in protective suits. Violence erupted when workers rebelled over their contracts

Lockdowns are still part of life

Behind the story

A photo began to circulate quickly through my messaging groups yesterday (Didi Tang writes). It showed two people in protective gear guarding the entrance to a residential unit in my compound, now cordoned off.

Everyone understood the significance: officials were sealing off the building and screening all tenants as someone may have tested positive for coronavirus. If so, the infected individual will have been hauled off to an isolation facility and everyone else would undergo home isolation.

Several of my friends and my children's teachers have been locked down in the past ten days as the Omicron variant has spread rapidly through the city. The virus may pose some risk to health but it's the frequent disruptions to our lives that have hurt most. Beijing claims these "precision lockdowns" minimise disruption to daily life; however, the order to close non-essential businesses, the almost unanimous decision by schools to go online and the government call for residents to stay at home equates to some sort of lockdown — part mandatory.

After three years of pandemic, some businesses may be shuttered for ever, including the bars in my neighbourhood, where the lights went out in June. Beijing has given up on reaching this year's growth target of 5.5 per cent. Nevertheless, remarks by President Xi about the resilience of the Chinese economy and the long view have made it clear he is willing to sacrifice the economy for the time being to stamp out the virus, even if that looks more and more futile.

Bomb attacks target Jerusalem traffic

Israel
Anshel Pfeffer Jerusalem

A teenager was killed and at least 14 people were wounded by bombs at traffic intersections in northern Jerusalem yesterday.

Israeli security sources said the two explosions, which took place within half an hour of each other, had "all the hallmarks" of previous terror attacks by Palestinian organisations.

The first blast was a few minutes after 7am local time next to a crowded bus stop at the main exit from Jerusalem to the Tel Aviv highway. Twelve people were wounded, one of whom died shortly afterwards in hospital.

About 20 minutes later there was a second explosion several miles to the east, at another exit from Jerusalem near the Ramot neighbourhood. Three people were wounded. Most of the blast from the second bomb was absorbed by a bus that had stopped to pick up passengers.

The person killed was identified as Aryeh Schupak, 15, who was heading to a Jewish seminary when the blast went off. He was a Canadian citizen. Justin Trudeau, Canada's prime minister, said he was saddened by the killing and condemned the violence "in the strongest possible terms".

Hundreds of mourners including senior politicians gathered yesterday evening for Schupak's funeral in Jerusalem.

A senior Israeli police officer said the bombs had been constructed in a "very similar" way and had been detonated from afar by a mobile phone. He said they had been concealed in bags by someone riding an electric scooter.

Despite the security service's initial analysis that the attacks were carried out by Palestinian terrorists, there was uncertainty over who was responsible. Over the past eight months there has been a steady escalation in attacks, which began with a wave of shootings in Israeli cities between March and May in which 20 people were killed.

However, simultaneous bombings of bus stops in Jerusalem indicate a higher level of planning than shootings and have rarely been carried out since the end of the second Palestinian intifada in the early 2000s.

Omer Bar-Lev, the outgoing public security minister, and Itamar Ben-Gvir, who is expected to take on the role in the incoming right-wing coalition under Binyamin Netanyahu, were both at the scene. Ben-Gvir vowed to "make the terrorists pay a heavy price" and added that "Israel needs to return to a policy of targeted assassinations".



A bus was sprayed with shrapnel in one of the attacks in Jerusalem

Seoul builds anti-missile system to bolster defences

South Korea
Michael Evans

South Korea has successfully tested a domestically produced anti-ballistic missile system that will add a new layer of protection against the increasing threat of strikes by Pyongyang.

Hit-to-kill interceptors destroyed high-altitude targets during the test, it was reported. Military officials disclosed few details, but the success of the long-range, surface-to-air missile was confirmed by South Korea's Yonhap news agency three weeks after North Korea had fired 23 ballistic missiles into the sea on a single day.

South Korea has deployed a lower-level missile defence system, based on a medium-range, surface-to-air missile, that is designed to target ballistic missiles at an altitude of about 12 miles.

The new interceptor system can hit incoming missiles at an altitude of between 25 and 60 miles, according to Janes, the intelligence company. It has been under development since 2019 and is expected to be operational by 2024. With a planned range of about 90 miles, it will be able to destroy ballistic missiles and high-flying aircraft.

The steady build-up of anti-ballistic missile defence systems in South Korea has become more urgent amid the unprecedented number of ballistic missiles to have been launched by North Korea this year, numbering more than 60 so far. Last week North Korea test-fired a Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile, which flew nearly 620 miles for about 69 minutes. It was fired from a mobile transporter and was designed to carry a nuclear warhead

The new system will combine with American missiles that already protect South Korea from its neighbour: the Patriot PAC-3 and the THAAD (terminal high-altitude area defence) system.

Fashion house pulls adverts showing children with 'bondage' teddies

Spain

David Sharrock Madrid

The fashion house Balenciaga has withdrawn its Christmas advertising campaign and apologised for portraying children with sexual bondage gear.

"We sincerely apologise for any offence our holiday campaign may have caused," it said after an outcry over the sexualised photographs of children posing with teddy bears wearing bondage items. "Our plush bearbags should not have been featured with children in this campaign."

The campaign features images of two child models posing with "plush bear" handbags from its Paris Fashion Week spring/summer 2023 collection. The bears are wearing collars with padlocks, fishnets and leather harnesses.

Another advertisement, for Balenciaga's "hourglass bag", included documents alleged to be an extract from a United States Supreme Court ruling that ratified the Protect Act, a federal law that criminalises the promotion of child pornography. The photograph does not appear in Balenciaga's "Toy Stories" campaign but was taken from a separate campaign for the brand.

Balenciaga, which was founded in Spain in 1919 and moved to Paris in 1937, said via Instagram: "We apologise for displaying unsettling documents in our campaign. We take this very seriously and are taking legal action against the parties responsible for creating the set. We condemn abuse of children. We stand for children's safety and wellbeing."

The images were criticised on social media, with users questioning whether Kim Kardashian, a Balenciaga ambassador, would condemn them.



Balenciaga apologised to those offended by its festive campaign

Bella Hadid, the model, has deleted her Instagram post promoting the label.

June Nicole Lapine, whose @shoeonhead account has more than half a million followers, said: "Balenciaga did a uh … interesting … photoshoot for their new products which featured a very purposely poorly hidden court document about virtual child porn — normal stuff."

China's taste for fine wine helps Burgundy toast a vintage year

France

Adam Sage Paris

The global economy may be in the doldrums but for Burgundy's wine makers the outlook is rosy.

The world's wealthiest drinkers, and notably the Chinese, seem to have developed an unprecedented thirst for their bottles in the latest sign that the high end of the French luxury sector is continuing to flourish despite a widespread crisis.

Take, for instance, the Hospices de Beaune auction of Burgundy wines conducted by Sotheby's last weekend, which set an upbeat tone for the east-central region.

Sales raised a total of €31 million, more than double the previous record of €13.97 million. Le Monde reported local producers describing the result as "exceptional", "incredible" and "unimaginable".

The wine is sold in 228-litre barrels. One of the containers filled with Corton grand cru — described in the tasting notes as having "great distinction, with a vertical framework as well as breadth and depth" — fetched €810,000.

Five barrels of Bâtard-Montrachet Grand Cru Cuvée Dames de Flandres — described in the notes as a "broad-shouldered wine but without an ounce of spare flesh" — sold for €324,000 each, more than double the Sotheby's estimate. The wine on sale was from grapes picked this summer, which means it will have to be aged for several years in barrels stored in Burgundy cellars before being bottled and dispatched to purchasers.

The keenly awaited auction is held each year to raise money for local hospitals, which include their own wines in the sale. The infirmaries were given 60 hectares of Burgundy's finest vineyards in 1443 by the chancellor to Philippe le Bon, the region's duke. They still depend on revenue generated by the vines.

Prices were expected to fall this year because though the vintage was excellent, it was also abundant. Instead, they rose by an average of 8 per cent compared with the auction last year. Albéric Bichot, whose family has been making Burgundy wine since 1831, described the rise as a "beautiful and enormous surprise".

He attributed the increase to interest from connoisseurs from Britain and America, as well as from China and other parts of Asia. "Our Chinese, American, English, Scottish and other friends … know that this is a great vintage," he said.

Burgundies have long been cherished by traditionalists but were spurned by China's new billionaires in favour of bottles from the larger and more powerful Bordeaux region in the southwest of France.

The Chinese craze for Bordeaux faded when its wines came to be seen by President Xi's regime as a symbol of western decadence. Burgundy, which likes to think of itself as more discreet, appears to be benefiting. Lin Legun, a Chinese buyer, said her compatriots were "enormously" keen on the region's wines, adding that when "Asia starts to like a rare product", prices escalate.

Bichot said that drinkers were demanding "finesse and elegance". They had gone off wines that were "too tannic", taken as a reference to Bordeaux.

CARLOS ALVAREZ/GETTY IMAGES



Red leather day **Queen Letizia of Spain at an event related to mental health and intellectual disabilities at the Parc Sanitari Sant Joan de Deu in Barcelona**

French chef says menu will be out of this world

Adam Sage

French plans to grow cabbage on the moon have won the backing of a leading chef who wants to develop dishes for astronauts using freshly picked vegetables.

Thierry Marx, 53, an adherent of "molecular gastronomy", has joined a project that aims to create recipes using vegetables produced in a high-tech box that can be sent into space.

Marx has ordered students at his cooking school in Toulouse, southwest France, to work with him on the lunar food of the future. Toulouse is known both for its gastronomy and as the centre of France's aerospace industry.

At the heart of the project is a vegetable box invented by Orius, a start-up linked to the French National Centre for Space Studies.

Paul-Hector Oliver, founder of Orius, said the box was a sophisticated form of indoor vegetable garden. "We can control the injections of CO_2, the injections of nutrients and control the temperature within 0.2C," he told the France Culture radio station.

"For light, we have eight colour channels, but we can also control the intensity of the light. The idea is to … programme the environment to have, for instance, 30-hour days, to have dawn and dusk, to reproduce, for example, a mountain climate."

The challenge, Oliver said, would be to reduce the weight of his 500kg fridge-like, stainless steel box so that it could be sent to the moon.

He said cabbage was the "flagship" vegetable of the programme, but added that tomatoes and other items would be considered.

This could be a welcome move, given that even Marx may struggle to come up with gastronomic recipes from cabbage alone.

Toulouse's Purpan engineering school and Paris-Saclay University are also involved in the programme, along with Toulouse's main food market.

Kanye West 'showed explicit images of Kardashian to bully staff'

United States

Keiran Southern Los Angeles

Kanye West allegedly showed explicit images of Kim Kardashian, then his wife, to employees in an effort to bully them, according to an investigation into his Yeezy fashion brand.

The rapper and fashion designer's career in Hollywood already appeared to be hanging by a thread over his antisemitic remarks. West's social media accounts were suspended and Adidas ended its partnership with the star.

The report by Rolling Stone on his fashion label alleges the star used sexualised intimidation tactics against staff and often directed them towards women. In one meeting he is said to have dressed down a female designer and demanded of her: "I want you to make me a shoe I can f***."

In 2018 West allegedly held a job interview for a "young creative" in Chicago, only to show the candidate an explicit picture of Kardashian, the magazine reported. "It was very revealing and personal," the applicant told the magazine. "I didn't really react."

West, 45, is also said to have shown an explicit video of Kardashian to members of the creative team at Yeezy at least once in 2018.

A former staff member said: "He [West] is not afraid to show explicit images or talk about situations that should be kept private."

Kardashian, 42, the mother of the star's four children, filed for divorce last year. They married in 2014.

West is also said to have shown collaborators homemade sex tapes featuring himself. In October, he released a documentary on YouTube during which he showed Adidas executives a pornographic video on a phone.

One former collaborator said: "I feel it was a tactic to break a person down and establish their unwavering allegiance."

This week former high-ranking employees at Yeezy sent a letter to Adidas urging it to address "the toxic and chaotic environment that Kanye West created" and "a very sick pattern of predacious behaviour toward women", according to Rolling Stone. The letter allegedly said: "He has, in years past, exploded at women in the room with offensive remarks, and would resort to sexually disturbing references when providing design feedback. This type of response is one that Adidas employees should never be subjected to."

A grand gesture for tribe forced out

The "offensive" name of a popular hiking spot in the Grand Canyon has been changed after an agreement with the Native American tribe forced out of the area almost a century ago (Keiran Southern writes).

Indian Garden, which is on the Bright Angel Trail in Arizona, has officially been renamed Havasupai Gardens, the National Park Service announced this week. Officials said they were righting a historical wrong after the Havasupai tribe were forced out in 1926.

"Every year, approximately 100,000 people visit the area while hiking the Bright Angel Trail, largely unaware of this history," Thomas Siyuja Sr, chairman of the tribe, said. He said the old name was "offensive", adding that the "renaming of this sacred place to Havasupai Gardens will finally right that wrong".

The area originally was called Ha'a Gyoh, until the parks service instituted policies that led to the eviction of the Havasupai people, culminating in the removal by force of the last resident in 1928. Nevertheless, members of the tribe continued to live and work within the wider national park.

Siyuja said his tribe had always called the area its homeland, adding: "The creator made the Havasupai people the guardians of the Grand Canyon and this is a role that we take very seriously. We are a small tribe. But our voices and our spirits are large."

The United States is marking National Native American Heritage Month. A rededication ceremony for the area will be held early next year, the parks service said. Additionally, efforts are under way to update signs, the website and other materials.

Ed Keable, superintendent of the Grand Canyon National Park, said: "The Havasupai people have actively occupied this area since time immemorial, before the land's designation as a national park and until the park forcibly removed them in 1926. This renaming is long overdue. It is a measure of respect."



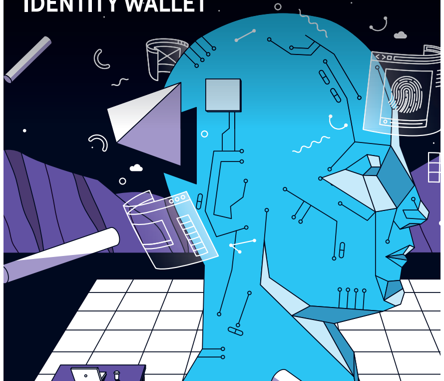
ALAMY

The Havasupai people had been evicted from an area of the Grand Canyon's Bright Angel Trail by 1928. It has been renamed, from Indian Garden, for them

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Republicans aim to ease DeSantis's path to power

United States
Hugh Tomlinson Washington

Officials in Florida have indicated that they will change state law to pave the way for Ron DeSantis, the governor of Florida, to run for president in 2024.

DeSantis has emerged as the strongest potential rival to Donald Trump for the Republican nomination since winning a second term as governor at the midterm elections two weeks ago. Under Florida law, he would be required to step down if he won the presidential nomination.

Republican legislators in Florida suggested this week that they would support allowing DeSantis to stay on as governor while he campaigned for the White House. Paul Renner, the Speaker of the Florida House, and Kathleen Passidomo, president of the Florida Senate, said on Tuesday that they backed the proposed change.

"If an individual who is Florida governor is running for president, I think he should be allowed to do it. I really do," Passidomo said. "That's a big honour and a privilege, so it is a good idea."

Trump announced his third run for the White House last week but potential Republican rivals are yet to show their hand. DeSantis again sidestepped questions about his presidential ambitions last week, telling people to "chill out a little bit". His victory at the midterms has cemented his position as the front-runner in the pack challenging Trump and attracted a surge of support from conservative media and donors.

The midterms were disappointing for the Republicans and Trump when a predicted "red wave" failed to materialise. The party regained control of the House of Representatives but only with a narrow majority. It failed to take back the Senate and many of Trump's endorsed candidates were defeated in key races. The former president has been widely blamed for saddling the party with extremist candidates who were rejected by voters.

Trump pressed ahead last week with his announcement that he would run for the White House in 2024. The event was overshadowed by the growing clamour among Republicans for DeSantis to stand and the former president to step aside.

Trump remains the clear favourite for the Republican nomination but a Harvard Caps/Harris Poll survey this week showed support for DeSantis rising by 11 points to 28 per cent in a hypothetical Republican primary, while support for Trump fell nine points to 46 per cent.

"Month after month DeSantis has been rising and now he is cutting significantly into Trump," Mark Penn, the co-director of the Harvard Caps/Harris Poll, told The Hill website. "If they both run . . . Trump could well lose."

Trump has accused his rival of disloyalty by not revealing his presidential ambitions. Trump's endorsement was critical to DeSantis winning his first term as governor in 2018, and the former president is frustrated that his protégé has declined to clear the field.

"He says, 'I'm only focused on the governor's race, I'm not looking into the future.' Well, in terms of loyalty and class, that's really not the right answer," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social platform.

Trump also faces mounting legal troubles that have spurred hope among rivals that he could be forced out of the primary race. Last week the Department of Justice appointed a special prosecutor to examine potential criminal charges over Trump's involvement in the riot at the US Capitol on January 6 last year and classified government documents seized by the FBI at his Florida home of Mar-a-Lago in August.



Under Florida's current laws, Ron DeSantis, who has surged in polls of Republican voters in recent weeks, will have to step down as the state's governor if he runs for president, although officials say they are ready to change the rules

Dubai plans to build tallest block of flats

Dubai
Foreign staff

The tallest residential skyscraper in the world could be built in Dubai, with an equally high level of luxury.

The Gulf emirate already has the world's tallest building — the Burj Khalifa, which stands at 2,722ft, or just over half a mile, and has a hotel and offices, as well as high-end apartments.

Binghatti, a property developer based in the United Arab Emirates, is building the tower in partnership with Jacobs & Co, the jewellery maker.

"The proposed design comprises over 100 storeys that are made of lavish two-bedroom and three-bedroom residences," the company said in a statement. "This hypertower also houses a dedicated concierge team, offering *a la carte* services such as daycare, bodyguard, chauffeur and private chef."

Diamond-shaped spires from the roof will give the building the appearance of a bejewelled crown.

The tallest residential building is the Central Park Tower in New York, at 1,550ft with 98 floors. The height of the Dubai proposal has not been disclosed.

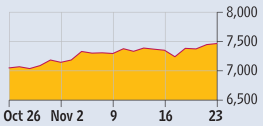


The Binghatti residential tower in Dubai will have more than 100 storeys

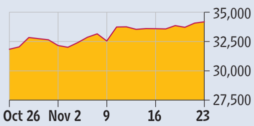
Business

WORLD MARKETS (Change on the day)

FTSE 100
7,465.24 (+12.40) ▲



Dow Jones
34,194.06 (+95.96) ▲

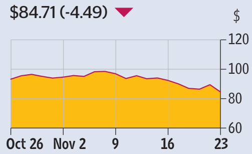


COMMODITIES

Gold
$1,743.37 (+4.19) ▲



Brent crude (6pm)
$84.71 (-4.49) ▼

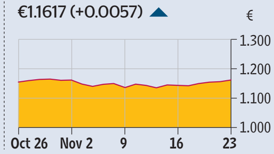


CURRENCIES

£/$
$1.2040 (+0.0161) ▲



£/€
€1.1617 (+0.0057) ▲



Federal Reserve prepares to slow pace of rate rises as inflation eases

Mehreen Khan Economics Editor

The US Federal Reserve could slow down the pace of its record interest rate rises in the coming months, according to a "majority" of rate-setters.

In the published minutes of the Fed's most recent decision this month, officials said that a gradually slower pace of monetary easing was appropriate after signs that 40-year high inflation is receding in the world's largest economy.

"A substantial majority of participants judged that a slowing in the pace of increase would likely soon be appropriate," the minutes of the Fed's November meeting said. "A slower pace in these circumstances would better allow the committee to assess progress toward its goals of maximum employment and price stability."

The world's most powerful central bank raised interest rates by 75 basis points for the fourth consecutive time this month, and warned that rates may have to peak higher than investor expectations. The hawkish signalling from Jerome Powell, the Fed chairman, led to the steepest daily drop in the dollar since 2020. A weakening currency poses problems for the central bank as it stokes inflationary pressure.

The Fed also indicated it was ready to step back from 75 basis point rate rises. Since the meeting, money markets have priced in a 50 basis point tightening at the central bank's next meeting in December and think US interest rates will peak at 5 per cent next year. The Fed Funds rate stands at a range of 3.75-4 per cent, the highest since 2009.

Mary Daly, a Fed rate-setter, said this week that it would be "premature" to take the prospect of another 75 basis point rise off the table for next month. James Knightley at ING bank said the central bank will be closely watching next week's employment numbers as a guide to how much more tightening the economy can withstand. Paul Ashworth at Capital Economics, said it was "all but guaranteed" the US economy would slip into recession next year.

Wall Street reacted positively with the S&P 500 closing up 23.68 points, or 0.6 per cent, at 4,027.26 and the Dow Jones industrial average up 95.96 points, or 0.3 per cent, to 34,194.06. The tech-heavy Nasdaq gained 110.91 points, or 1 per cent, to 11,285.32.

'Illegal' LDIs blamed for gilts chaos

Regulators failed to stop funds using derivatives

Patrick Hosking Financial Editor

The widely used investment technique that amplified and fuelled the gilts market crisis in late September was "almost certainly illegal", MPs heard yesterday.

Experts lined up in front of the Commons select committee on work and pensions to criticise the leverage inherent in much so-called liability driven investment (LDI) and to warn that "carnage" had been inflicted on some pension schemes that used it.

Dr Con Keating, a bond market veteran and now head of research at the specialist insurer Brighton Rock Group, said borrowing by pension funds was explicitly prohibited but regulators had not stopped pension funds using LDI.

Some LDI implicitly employs leverage through the purchase of derivatives including interest rate swaps and so-called repurchase agreements widely known as repos.

"There's a question of legality there," Keating said, adding that the ambiguity was down to what he called a "mistransposition" — when an EU directive on the use of derivatives by pension funds was turned into UK rules.

"Use of derivatives to hedge liabilities is almost certainly illegal," he said. "No English court would support that transposition," he explained, saying a key word in the EU original was dropped and a sentence, explicitly permitting derivatives investment, added.

Gilt prices crashed in September as traders dumped bonds in the wake of the Truss government's mini-budget, which was seen as adding to inflationary pressures and relying on imprudent levels of borrowing.

The crisis was enormously amplified because LDI required pension funds to stump up collateral to honour their leveraged bets on gilts, forcing them to sell more bonds. The Bank of England stepped in with a taxpayer-funded £65 billion gilt-buying package on the grounds of financial stability.

Keating said the implosion, and its extraordinary speed, was "entirely predictable" but thought that had he voiced concern he would not have been believed. "To predict chaos of that order would have been an invitation to be dismissed as nutters," he said.

He said regulators should have done more to get to grips with the threat. A survey looking into LDI by The Pensions Regulator in 2019 was " not worth the paper it was written on" because of methodological flaws and the absence of a numerical risk estimate.

Professor Iain Clacher of Leeds Business School said the blame lay with the pensions watchdog. It never stood back to examine what was happening on a macro level with so many pension funds all taking the same leveraged positions. He estimated that pension funds had to sell as much as £500 billion in assets to meet collateral calls.

In a later session, consultants and actuaries emphatically rejected that view, saying LDI had been a boon to pension funds, helping to close huge funding deficits as well as reducing volatility. Leah Evans, chairwoman of the pen-

Continued on page 42

ITV/REX/SHUTTERSTOCK



Rumble in the jungle Mike Tindall and Matt Hancock take part in the Deals on Wheels challenge in ITV's I'm a Celebrity … Get Me Out of Here!. Fans of the hit show will also be able to compete in jungle challenges online on the video game Fortnite

De La Rue attacks EY over 'warning'

Alex Ralph

The chief executive of De La Rue launched an extraordinary attack on his company's external auditor, accusing EY of exhibiting an "overabundance of caution" in issuing a warning over its future as a going concern.

Shares in the bank note printer fell by 23 per cent to 77p on the London Stock Exchange yesterday after it cut its profit forecast for a third time this year.

EY flagged a "severe but plausible downside scenario" in De La Rue's half-year results, under which if key currency contracts are not won, or fall outside the going concern period, and the company "is not able to secure alternative contracts, without sufficient and timely cost mitigation", it would breach a covenant on its revolving credit facility. EY, one of the big four auditors, said it indicated that a "material uncertainty exists that may cast significant doubt on the company's ability to continue as a going concern".

Clive Vacher, 52, who said his turnaround had "saved" De La Rue added that the "board and the management strongly disagree with the assessment of EY". Vacher said it was "based on analysis that is neither plausible nor realistic and done with an overabundance of caution from Ernst & Young".

He said that within the past week, its banks had signed an extension to the company's credit facilities "without expressing any concern about the covenant levels, in fact, they've stayed the same", adding: "For Ernst & Young to come in and make that assessment, I think it's just not something that I would agree with."

Vacher said it was "too early" to determine whether the company would look for another auditor.

A spokesman for EY said: "We do not comment on the companies we audit."

De La Rue, based in Basingstoke, Hampshire, was founded as a print business by Thomas De La Rue in 1813, and was once a FTSE 100 company.

A going concern warning was issued at De La Rue's half-year results in November 2019, a month after Vacher began his turnaround, and which he yesterday said that the board had agreed with. "So we're not being unreasonable," he added.

De La Rue 'saved', page 45

Business

Need to know

1 The widely used investment technique that amplified and fuelled the gilts market crisis in late September was “almost certainly illegal”, MPs heard yesterday. Dr Con Keating, head of research at the specialist insurer Brighton Rock Group, said borrowing by pension funds was explicitly prohibited. Page 39

2 The US Federal Reserve could slow down the pace of interest rate rises in the coming months, according to a “majority” of rate-setters. The minutes show they said that a gradually slower pace of monetary easing was now appropriate after signs that high inflation is receding. Page 39

3 Clive Vacher, chief executive of De La Rue, launched an extraordinary attack on his company’s external auditor, accusing EY of an “overabundance of caution” in issuing a warning over its future as a going concern. He said it was “based on analysis that is neither plausible nor realistic”. Page 39

4 The short-seller that called out Wirecard as a fraud has set its sights on Home Reit, which bills itself as a landlord for the homeless. Viceroy Research flagged a number of concerns, including doubts about tenants’ ability to pay rent and the prices its paid for some houses.

5 The founder of FTX has apologised to former employees saying he “lost track of the most important things” amid his company’s rapid growth. Sam Bankman-Fried, 30, wrote to staff to express his regret at oversight failings in the lead up to the cryptocurrency exchange’s spectacular fall into bankruptcy.

6 Output across the UK fell for a fourth month in November, adding to fears the economy is in recession. Survey data from private sector purchasing managers showed falling activity in November as companies battle high inflation, weak sentiment and the cost of living crisis. Page 42

7 A fresh objection has been expressed to the takeover of Aveva, the UK software company. Jupiter, the asset manager, said it would be “good for London and long-termism if voters said no” to Schneider Electric’s £9.9 billion offer. Page 44

8 The continued turnaround of De La Rue has saved the 209-year-old company, its chief executive has insisted. The shares closed down 23p, or 23 per cent, at 77p after it cut its annual profit forecast, weakened by a downturn in the banknote industry. Page 45

9 A healthcare company boss facing disqualification proceedings over drug price rises has temporarily stepped down. Alliance Pharma said Peter Butterfield was expected to return in January. Page 47

10 Made.com, the online furniture retailer, collapsed owing customers £17.1 million. PwC administrators calculated the company went bust owing a total of £186.6 million to unsecured creditors including about 12,000 customers and suppliers. Page 49

Rising heating costs eat into Pets at Home profits

Rising energy bills from keeping its in-store inventory of rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters and tropical fish warm overnight are eating away at profits at Pets at Home (Tom Saunders writes).



While rival retailers can shave costs by lowering the thermostat when the doors close, the animals housed in the pets chain’s tanks and enclosures must be kept comfortable through the cold winter nights.

“It’s actually a little harder for us than for other retailers because we have pets in most of our care centres,” Lyssa McGowan, chief executive, told Bloomberg. “We’re unable to vary the temperature too much because we need to keep them safe and comfortable.”

Pets at Home was a darling of the pandemic, with its share price more than doubling in 18 months as locked-down families turned to animals for company and comfort. In the past six months, however, it has come under pressure from both higher energy and freight costs.

Underlying pre-tax profit dropped by 9.3 per cent to £59.2 million over the half-year to October 13, compared with the same period last year. The company said this was in line with expectations as it held profit targets for the year.

Despite the bleak macroeconomic environment, the company said the great British love affair with animals remains “resilient”.

It has continued to see rising sales, recording a 6.4 per cent growth in group revenue, with its sales and veterinary arms enjoying increases of 5.9 per cent and 10.5 per cent respectively.



Short-seller targets Home Reit after ‘red flags’ raised

Tom Howard

The short-seller that first called out Wirecard as a fraud has now set its sights on Home Reit, the FTSE 250 real estate investment trust that bills itself as a landlord for the homeless.

Viceroy Research flagged a number of concerns with the business, including doubts about tenants’ ability to pay rent, the prices Home Reit paid for some of its houses and the structure that determines how much the fund managers receive in fees.

In response, Home Reit stated that Viceroy’s claims were “inaccurate and misleading . . . [and] based on mistaken assumptions, misinformed comments, and disputable allegations”.

It added: “The report was published without any engagement with the company’s board, investment adviser, or wider advisory team. The company will publish a full and detailed response demonstrating the factual inaccuracies and selective use of information in due course.”

The rebuttal failed to restore confidence among investors, with Home Reit shares closing down by 15¼p, or 19.6 per cent, at 62¼p, valuing the business at £470 million — about £130 million less than it was worth on Tuesday evening. Wirecard collapsed in 2020 with the German payments group owing billions of euros to creditors. Viceroy first flagged its concerns over the company four years before the failure.

Short-sellers, including Viceroy, profit from falls in their targets’ share prices. They do this by borrowing shares and immediately selling them, before buying them back at a later date, hopefully for less than they paid.

Viceroy has built a 0.82 per cent short position, which works out to a bet of about £5 million that Home Reit’s stock market value will fall.

Home Reit floated in London last month, since when it has tapped investors for £850 million which it has spent building a portfolio of almost 12,000 beds in houses and small blocks of flats that it has bought and renovated.

It says that “robust tenants”, such as charities and local councils, rent the properties, typically on 25-year leases, to house homeless people, including those who have just left prison or foster care or are victims of domestic abuse.

However, in a 27-page report, Viceroy, which is run by Fraser Perring, a former social worker, questioned the robustness of Home Reit’s tenants. “Not only are most of these tenants relatively newly formed, but many have financials that cast serious doubt on their ability to service these leases,” Viceroy said. “Some tenants do not appear to provide social housing at all.”

Viceroy raised concerns about the character of some of the people associated with Home Reit’s tenants, claiming that some have faced allegations of fraud and sexual harrassment. Other press reports have also highlighted alleged close links between a number of the company’s biggest tenants.

One of the main attractions of letting to tenants such as local authorities and charities is the reliability of the rental payments, given a number of leases will effectively be backed by government.

Viceroy argues that “government funds and grants appear to be limited in nature” with most tenants. If rents keep rising, the charities will have to raise ever-more money in donations to fulfil their lease obligations, which Viceroy believes may not be sustainable.

Viceroy also took issue with how Home Reit books its rent. After studying the accounts, the short-seller alleges that “substantial portions of rent will only be collectable at [the] latter end of the 25-year lease cycle, despite being recorded as revenue upfront”.

Some of the landlord’s biggest tenants “do not appear to be paying any rent at all” currently, it added. That is at odds with Home Reit’s assertion earlier this month that it has collected 100 per cent of its rents so far this year.

Home Reit is run by Alvarium, the London-based fund manager, whose fees are based on a percentage of the landlord’s net asset value. This, Viceroy alleges, “does not align Alvarium’s compensation with the performance of the portfolio, only how much they spend”.

As a result, there is “no incentive for Alvarium to purchase properties on the cheap”, the short-seller claims. It highlighted a number of transactions that it believes were done at “an inflated price thereby artificially inflating its net asset value”. Other recently purchased properties “display unreasonable appreciation over a short period of time”.

Knight Frank, the property agent that values Home Reit’s buildings, has never been into any of them. Citing the “sensitive nature of the uses and occupants”, the valuers have only ever inspected the properties externally, which Viceroy says is a “major red flag”.

Viceroy chief’s biggest bet went down to the wire

The name Viceroy stems from tulip mania in the 1630s when “Viceroy” bulbs surged in price and became more valuable than the average house at the time (Tom Howard writes).

It was a bubble that eventually burst, making Viceroy an apt name for a company that wagers millions of pounds betting against companies it thinks are overvalued.

The short-seller is run by Fraser Perring, a former child protection officer, and two analysts with whom he has worked for the best part of a decade.

Viceroy rose to prominence in the City with its call on Wirecard, the collapsed German payments group. Perring and his team were the first to air concerns.

Working with Matthew Earl, the short-seller behind Shadowfall, Viceroy started looking into Wirecard in the summer of 2015 and published its first critical research note in 2016.

However, the company kept going until June 2020, when it filed for insolvency owing €3.5 billion in one of Europe’s biggest ever corporate failures.

Perring, who generally backs his calls with his own money, says that he was “technically bankrupt” in the run-up to that failure. Had Wirecard not gone under when it did, he was looking at a hefty loss.

Wirecard was Viceroy’s most commercially successful short attack, but it has also targeted SBB, a Swedish property group, and Adler, the German residential landlord, which it accused of widespread fraud a year ago. It can now add Home Reit to its list of residential property targets.



JOHN SHORT/GETTY IMAGES



Subscription plans across the company grew by 11 per cent year-on-year, while the number of active members of its Pets at Homes VIP Club grew by 9 per cent to 7.6 million.

Spending on pets is seen as particularly resistant to downturns, with owners more likely to forgo spending on themselves before their fluffy companions.

The company has made no change to its full-year guidance, expecting full-year pre-tax profit to be in line with analysts' consensus estimate of £131 million.

It also increased its dividend to 4.5p per share, an increase of 4.7 per cent year-on-year.

The company's share price fell by 15½p, or 5 per cent, to 288¾p.

McGowan, who took over from Peter Pritchard as chief executive just six months ago, said: "In my first six months as chief executive, I have spent my time forming a deep understanding of the business and the sector, learning from the ground up how the business operates.

"I am more convinced than ever that Pets at Home is well-positioned to capitalise on an attractive growth opportunity."

Tempus, page 50



Pets at Home needs to keep its animals safe and comfortable, says boss Lyssa McGowan

FTX chief's apology for 'losing track'

Helen Cahill

The founder of FTX has apologised to former employees saying he "lost track of the most important things" amid his company's rapid growth.

Sam Bankman-Fried, 30, wrote a letter to staff to express his regret at oversight failings in the lead up to the cryptocurrency exchange's spectacular fall into bankruptcy this month.

He launched FTX in 2019 and it grew to be one of the world's largest with more than a million users, a $32 billion valuation and backing from blue-chip investors including Sequoia and BlackRock.

In a two-page letter yesterday, first obtained by Bloomberg, he wrote: "I didn't mean for any of this to happen, and I would give anything to be able to go back and do things over again".

He said that FTX was floored by a crash in crypto assets which halved its collateral to $30 billion in the spring, followed by a sudden drought in credit and a "run" which saw creditors scramble to withdraw their assets. He said he "froze up in the face of pressure" as his company collapsed, and calculated it had been left with $9 billion in collateral, against $8 billion in liabilities.

Bankman-Fried wrote: "I never intended this to happen. I did not realise the full extent of the margin position, nor did I realise the magnitude of the risk posed by a hyper-correlated crash.

$8bn

FTX liabilities after collapse
Source: Sam Bankman-Fried

I deeply regret my oversight failure ... I lost track of the most important things in the commotion of company growth."

The lawyer overseeing FTX's bankruptcy has told a court in Delaware that Bankman-Fried ran the company as "his own personal fiefdom" with "a lack of corporate controls at a level none of us in the profession had ever seen".

The court heard that funds were transferred between different parts of his empire. Some were sent to Alameda Research, FTX's sister hedge fund, to back other companies, while others were used for non-business expenses. One entity spent $300 million on properties including holiday homes in the Bahamas "used by senior executives".

James Bromley, a partner at US law firm Sullivan & Cromwell acting for FTX's new directors, said: "FTX was in the control of a small group of inexperienced and unsophisticated individuals and unfortunately the evidence seems to indicate that some or all of them were compromised individuals."

Its collapse creates the risk of contagion. BlockFi, a crypto lender, has barred clients from taking out money after a $400 million loan from FTX this summer. Genesis Trading, a crypto lending platform, is reportedly on the brink of collapse, but has said it is trying to "resolve the situation consensually".

Bankman-Fried signed off his letter: "You were my family. I've lost that, and our old home is an empty warehouse of monitors. When I turn around, there's no one left to talk to."

Farage investment tips fail to pay off

Russell Hotten

After stepping away from politics, Nigel Farage returned to the world of investment, dispensing advice about how to "take back control of your money".

His newsletters and podcasts promise "deep insights" and to tell you "what's really happening in the financial markets". But how has the return of the face of Brexit to his investment roots been going?

Not great, according to Bloomberg, the financial news agency. If you had been following some of his investment suggestions, you would have been better off putting money into a standard share index tracker fund.

Bloomberg has been following recommendations in a paid-for newsletter, UK Independent Wealth, published by Southbank Investment Research. Farage and Rob Marstrand, a former UBS banker, created three model portfolios "focusing on smart, strategic plays on the UK stock market".

Bloomberg took a notional £100,000 and tracked 16 investments ranging from Unilever to gold exchange-traded funds. Using its own data analysis tools and with the help of Tim Steer, a City investment expert, Bloomberg concluded that the theoretical £100,000 would be worth £93,300 after two years. Had it been put into a FTSE All-Share tracker fund, the investment would have been worth £118,000.

That may be unfair to Farage, a former commodities trader whose father also worked in the City, given that he stresses the importance of taking a long-term view when investing. But according to Bloomberg, in a ranking of the UK's top fund managers, the Farage portfolio would be about 150 out of 166.

Steer, who managed huge sums at Artemis Investment Management, said the Farage portfolio was too small and narrowly focused on the UK. But the inflation hedge strategy in the portfolio was sensible, he told Bloomberg.



Farage, left, did not reply to an emailed request for comment but has stressed that he does not personally give investment advice. Southbank Investment Research told The Times to send an email for comment but the paper has not yet had a reply.

De La Rue should listen to auditor



BUSINESS COMMENTARY *Alistair Osborne*

Plenty of companies get into fights with activist investors, but how many throw in a punch-up with the auditors? That's the novel approach from De La Rue: an outfit whose licence to print money has long been lost on its skint shareholders.

You know what? All Clive Vacher's bleating about the dastardly number-crunchers from EY might have even been persuasive if it hadn't been for one thing: the banknote printer's boss lobbing in its third profit warning this year.

Yes, Vacher objects to EY slapping a "material uncertainty related to going concern" badge on the half-year figures: one reason the shares dived 23 per cent to 77p, valuing the once FTSE-100 group at only £150 million. He says the "board and the management strongly disagree" with EY's assessment, arguing it's produced a worst-case "scenario that is neither plausible or realistic". Maybe he has a point, too, that De La Rue's banks have just allowed it to extend its debt facilities without raising similar concerns.

Yet, the covenant in question is the "ebit/net interest" variety. And, while Vacher may moan about EY's "overabundance of caution", who wouldn't take that sort of stance?

Forecast earnings before interest and tax, also known as operating profits, keep going down. By contrast, both interest rates and net debt — up from £71.4 million to £86.5 million year on year — keep going up. Vacher is guiding to adjusted full-year operating profits of as little as £30 million versus market estimates of £36 million. Rewind a year and Numis analysts were forecasting £56.5 million: a figure cut to £41.4 million after January's profits alert, £35.6 million after May's and now to £30.1 million. Why wouldn't EY be cautious?

Vacher's not had the easiest gig. Taking charge in October 2019, he inherited a business poleaxed by the reign of predecessor Martin "blue passports" Sutherland. A month earlier, a new chairman had arrived: Kevin Loosemore, the former Micro Focus boss whose "click and repeat" $8.8 billion Hewlett Packard assets buy blew up badly. By November 2019, it was Loosemore warning over De La Rue's "ability to continue as a going concern".

Then came Covid, forcing the duo into June 2020's £100 million equity raise at 110p. And Vacher, who says he's "saved" the business, insists that there's been improvement since: a revamp that's included getting out of a pricey paper-supply deal with Portals Paper at a cost of £19.3 million. He's also promising free cashflow next year, while arguing, rather conveniently, that he should be judged on the share price when he'd "exposed all the problems", May 2020's 37p, not the near-190p where he came in.

Even so, you see why activist Crystal Amber, with almost 10 per cent, is trying to oust Loosemore at December 2's extraordinary general meeting. Here is a group that makes its latest profits alert bullet point No 16 of 16 first-half "highlights". A business, too, that reports a 47 per cent operating profit drop to £9.3 million and then picks a fight with its auditors. Yes, Loosemore was re-elected with 97.8 per cent of the vote at July's annual meeting and may well see off Crystal Amber. But the activist's Richard Bernstein complains of a "management not taking responsibility", adding: "You can kid some of the people some of the time . . .". The board is running out of time to prove him wrong.

Last post

A "final and best offer" means something in takeover battles. Is the same true of industrial disputes? It's how Royal Mail-owner International Distributions Services is portraying its latest effort to get a deal with its striking posties: a bunch that keep walking out, and not only over the daft new name for the group, now sharing its initials with Iain Duncan Smith.

Anyway, listen to the chairman, Keith Williams, and the Royal Mail chief Simon Thompson and, after seven months of talks, this is as good as it'll get: a 9 per cent pay rise over 18 months, far better than their initial 5.5 per cent, even if some is linked to productivity gains; plus a fair bit of backing down over changes to working practices. Sunday shifts will be voluntary to start with, while the introduction of later start and finish times will be "family friendly", with workers also in line for a new profit-share plan.

So, how did the CWU react? By telling the 115,000 posties in the union that fresh strikes this week, earmarked for today and Black Friday, will "go ahead", with its boss Dave Ward hitting out at Royal Mail's "aggressive strategy". The shares fell 2.5 per cent to 238p.

So far Ward's tactics have brought fresh concessions. Yet, the strikes have cost Royal Mail £100 million to date, with the group losing £219 million last half. And the longer the dispute lasts, the less affordable its "final" £400 million pay offer becomes. Meantime, the case for a break-up to focus on the profitable GLS parcels wing grows by the day. Assuming the company is always bluffing looks a high-stakes game.

Hyper baloney

How could Sam Bankman-Fried be expected to "realise the magnitude of the risk posed by a hyper-correlated crash"? The founder of the FTX crypto exchange was too busy inventing "$60 billion" of fake collateral and running up $8 billion of real-world liabilities, while losing "track of the most important things in the commotion of company growth".

Apologising to staff, he told them he cared "deeply about you all, and you were my family". Still, not as much as his real family, what with his parents among the owners of $300 million of Bahamian properties bought by the FTX business he ran as a "personal fiefdom". Perhaps there's some sort of "hyper-correlated" link there. too.

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Business

MPs demand end to 'secrecy' over multibillion-pound Bulb bailout

James Hurley

The government has been criticised by MPs over the "secrecy" attached to the cost of bailing out Bulb.

The Treasury select committee yesterday told Jeremy Hunt, the chancellor, to provide details on why running the failed energy supplier is expected to add more than £200 to energy bills for every UK household.

Last week the Office for Budget Responsibility said that the bailout would cost £6.5 billion, with an extra £4.6 billion due to be spent on Bulb in the current financial year.

The government has disputed the figures but not provided its own breakdown. Dame Angela Eagle, committee member and Labour MP, said: "There's very little available information on that and in fact [the committee was] erroneously given a cost here and asked not to publish it a couple of months back. That cost was £4 billion."

She asked Hunt to explain where the additional cost had come from, if the cost to households might be even higher and "why on earth there is so much secrecy about it".

Hunt replied that rather than providing more "erroneous information" to MPs he would write to the committee with detailed information. "I appreciate it's a very important issue," he said.

Bulb, Britain's seventh-biggest supplier, collapsed a year ago as energy prices soared. It has since been run by Teneo in government-funded special administration. The cost of the state bailout is expected to be ultimately levied on consumer energy bills rather than funded through general taxation.

Octopus Energy has struck a deal to buy the business but the transaction has been delayed after rival energy companies claimed that the secretive deal might be unlawful.

During yesterday's hearing, Hunt said that the government was working on an energy support package for businesses that would probably focus on smaller companies and larger businesses in energy-intensive industries. This will replace the energy bill relief scheme, which provides a discount on bills for businesses and other non-domestic customers and expires at the end of March. However, the chancellor warned that it would not be "on the scale" of this year's scheme, which he said is expected to cost £18 billion.

Hunt said it had not been possible to get the new scheme ready to announce in last week's autumn statement.

Fears of recession grow as output falls for fourth consecutive month

Mehreen Khan Economics Editor

OWEN HUMPHREYS/PA



Export orders in the manufacturing sector recorded their worst decline since 2009 outside lockdowns during the pandemic

Output across the UK fell for the fourth month in a row in November, adding to fears that the economy has already entered a prolonged recession.

Survey data from purchasing managers across the private sector showed another month of falling activity as companies battle high inflation, weak sentiment and the cost of living crisis.

The flash composite purchasing managers' index (PMI) hit 48.3 this month, up from 48.2 in October — better than economists had forecast but still below the 50 mark that separates growth from contraction. The pound enjoyed a bounce, despite fresh figures indicating that the UK is in a recession, rising 1.3 per cent to $1.203, for the first time since mid-August.

Export orders in the manufacturing sector suffered a steep fall this month, recording the worst decline since 2009, barring the months of pandemic lockdowns. Overall, new orders across the private sector dropped to the weakest since the start of last year.

S&P Global, which helped compile the survey, said: "Many respondents commented on recession worries and increasingly challenging economic conditions, but there were fewer comments citing domestic political uncertainty."

The November flash estimates follow the appointment of a new government to quell financial panic and reverse September's mini-budget tax-cutting measures. The Bank of England and the Office for Budget Responsibility have said that they expect the economy has already fallen into a recession since the third quarter, when GDP contracted by 0.2 per cent.

Chris Williamson, chief business economist at S&P Global, said the November survey data "adds to growing signs that the UK is in recession". He added: "If pandemic lockdown months are excluded, the PMI for the fourth quarter so far is signalling the steepest economic contraction since the height of the global financial crisis in the first quarter of 2009, consistent with the economy contracting at a quarterly rate of 0.4 per cent."

Activity in UK services, which powers three-quarters of the economy, was unchanged at 48.8, while the manufacturing industry remained stagnant.

Moody's, the ratings agency, said yesterday that it expected the consolidation targeted by the government in its autumn statement "will prove challenging to achieve".

Bank economist casts doubt on interest rate predictions

The Bank of England's chief economist, Huw Pill, has said that interest rates may not need to rise as high as financial markets were predicting — 5.25 per cent next year — to tackle runaway inflation (Russell Hotten writes).

Pill said that more rises would be needed to get inflation back to the central bank's 2 per cent and monetary policy must always be conditional on future "economic shocks and disturbances".

But he said last night in a speech at the Institute of Directors: "In line with the Monetary Policy Committee's most recent forecast and communication and on the basis of the information we have available today, I do not anticipate the levels of bank rate priced in financial markets when the forecast's conditioning assumptions were frozen will be required."

Ministers back down in fight over regulation

Robert Miller

The government has backed down over plans to give ministers the power to force financial regulators to take advantage of the "opportunities of Brexit", after opposition from City watchdogs.

Last night, Andrew Griffith, the City minister, said the government had decided that the controversial new "intervention power", which was strongly opposed by Andrew Bailey, the governor of the Bank of England, would not go-ahead "at this time".

The Treasury minister said existing provisions in the Financial Services and Markets Bill before parliament were sufficient to allow Britain to "seize the opportunities of Brexit by tailoring financial services regulation to UK markets to bolster our competitiveness".

The proposed "intervention power" for ministers was originally put forward by Rishi Sunak when he was chancellor to show some positive benefits of Britain's departure from the European Union.

Bailey warned that giving ministers the chance to intervene in City regulatory matters would seriously undermine the independence of financial services watchdogs.

Griffith said: "We have always been keen to find the right balance between increased responsibility for the regulators, with clear accountability, appropriate democratic input, and transparent oversight. We remain committed to the operational independence of the financial services regulators."

In explaining its decision to scrap the proposed intervention power, the Treasury said: "The government was always clear that this mechanism would be a safety valve accompanied by appropriate safeguards."

Behind the story

There were no cold towels in room 16 at the House of Commons. But MPs on the work and pensions committee might have appreciated them as they grappled with the arcane mysteries of liability driven investment (Patrick Hosking writes).

One set of experts told them that such investment was a dangerous, expensive habit which had duped pension funds into excessive risk-taking, and only emergency support from the Bank of England prevented an existential disaster. On one view such investment was illegal.

The next set of experts insisted that liability-driven investment was a good thing and had helped thousands of pension schemes close funding shortfalls. It would be "bizarre", MPs were told, to deprive pension funds of this magic sauce.

Nigel Mills, the MP for Amber Valley, said: "This is all a bit beyond many of us," and took a pot shot at the "actuarial gymnastics" that he suspected might be hiding what was going on. One problem in coming to any conclusion on the episode is that the jury is still out on the damage, especially on smaller schemes which used pooled liability driven investment vehicles. MPs were told that there may have been "carnage" but the lack of disclosure meant it was too soon to say. The cost to taxpayers is unknown until the Bank sells the £19 billion of gilts that it bought to restore stability.

One thing that does seem to have aggravated the crisis was the gradually rising level of leverage in many liability driven investment positions. Early investment was largely about matching liabilities to assets to reduce funding volatility. Later it seems to have become more about geared bets on gilts.

Sensible hedging had turned into imprudent speculation and it paid off for years, helping to close deficits. The profits from what one expert described as the arbitrage play of borrowing short to buy long-dated gilts were mouthwatering. "Most hedge funds would dream of those margins," MPs were told.

Then it went wrong. "It worked till it didn't," MPs heard. Pension schemes have since cut their liability-driven investment exposure or accumulated much bigger stockpiles of liquid assets that can be used to fund collateral calls. But they may well slide back to their old habits, without rules or guidance from the Pensions Regulator. This needs a robust, credible response from all regulators. That won't be easy when the experts are so far apart.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

'Illegal' LDIs caused gilts chaos

sions board at the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries and a partner at EY, said LDI was "a valuable part of strategy".

She disagreed that leverage in LDI was necessarily bad and warned about the danger of any "knee-jerk bans on leverage".

She also dismissed any suggestion that LDI was not legal: "I have never heard a legal adviser once raise a concern about the legality of it [LDI investment]. Jonathan Camfield, a partner at the pensions advisers Lane Clark & Peacock, strongly defended the use of leverage by pension funds, arguing that they were some of the largest financial institutions in the country and it would be "bizarre" if they weren't allowed to use the tool of leverage.

Simon Nixon



Falling house prices could indicate we're in for a deep global recession

In his autumn statement last week, Jeremy Hunt claimed that by his actions he had ensured that the recession, which economists now agree Britain has entered, would be shorter and shallower than it would otherwise have been. It was an odd boast for the chancellor to have made since the depth and duration of the recession is not really in his hands. It will largely be determined by the scale of demand destruction that the Bank of England believes is necessary to meet its inflation target in the context of Britain's newly constrained supply side, of which the most obvious manifestation is the worker shortage.

All that Hunt could do via his budget was to influence the allocation of the economic pain, not least by ensuring that less of the burden of adjustment will take the form of higher interest rates.

However, the depth and duration of the recession in Britain will also be determined in part by what happens to the global economy. As things stand, few economists are predicting a deep global recession. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development forecasts that global growth will slow from 5.9 per cent last year to 2.2 per cent next year, while both America and the eurozone will experience only shallow downturns, with both thought likely expected to grow by 0.5 per cent in 2023. Indeed, expectations of a mild recession have hardened as the latest data suggests inflationary pressures may be abating in America while yesterday's PMI manufacturing surveys published show the eurozone economy doing no worse than expected.

Nonetheless, it is worth considering where this consensus might prove wrong. One of the most closely watched risks is the global housing market. The housing market has long been linked to the health of the economy, with large falls in property prices invariably a harbinger of recession. That is partly because house-price falls are usually triggered by rising interest rates, which eats into homeowners' disposable income. But there are other ways in which falling house prices directly damage the economy. They tend to prompt banks to tighten lending standards, which pushes up borrowing costs. They can also hit consumer spending via wealth effects, as homeowners see the value of their assets fall. Falling house prices also tend to lead to a decline in housebuilding, a significant contributor to GDP.



Liz Truss's tax cuts became tax rises under Jeremy Hunt

At first glance, there appears nothing much to worry about. The most recent US Shiller House price index shows house price growth in America has slowed, but prices are still 13 per cent higher than a year ago. An index of global house prices compiled by Absolute Strategy Research, which tracks data from 23 countries, similarly shows that annualised house-price growth has fallen from a peak of about 15 per cent last year to 8.6 per cent today. Yet when one looks at this data on a quarterly basis, a starker picture emerges. The ASR house price index has already turned negative, down 2.9 per cent in the three months to the end of September compared with the previous quarter, led by steep falls in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Norway. Eurozone house prices were also down over the quarter.

Of course, if these price falls are simply skimming off some of the froth in housing markets that built up during the era of cheap money, then there is no cause for concern. Indeed, many would welcome it. But there are already signs that a deeper downturn may be underway. In America, for example, the inventory of unsold houses, a normally reliable indicator of economic stress, has reached 9.2 months supply. That is a level previously reached only in the deepest recessions of the Seventies, Eighties and post-2008 global financial crisis. On each of those occasions, the build-up was linked, with a very sharp rise in unemployment, a financial crisis, and then cuts in interest rates.

True, US unemployment remains remarkably low at 3.7 per cent, but monetary policy works with a lag and the Fed is planning further rate rises. Could this trigger a much bigger housing downturn? There are plenty of warning lights flashing amber or even red. The collapse in global consumer confidence, for example, is already far greater even than during the global financial crisis or pandemic, which is bound to feed through to corporate earnings. At the same time, monetary conditions have tightened sharply. Global M1, a measure of the money supply, is falling faster than during the global financial crisis. Wealth destruction so far in this downturn is on a par with the global financial crisis.

The key to whether this remains a mild recession or becomes much worse is what happens to job losses since this risks turning some homeowners into forced sellers. Even if homeowners have to cut spending to cover higher mortgage payments, they are unlikely to default on mortgages unless they lose their income. So far, unemployment has remained remarkably low in all major economies. In fact, many countries, like Britain, have labour shortages, which may make firms even more inclined to hang on to workers. But that may change if corporate earnings decline and borrowing conditions tighten leading to rising default rates. In Britain, for example, the number of bankruptcies in October had already hit the levels of past recessions.

For investors, there are two risks. The first is that central banks, having been too slow to raise interest rates when inflation emerged, over-reach by raising rates too far, too fast, triggering a housing market crash and deep recession. The second risk is that fear of triggering a housing market crash leads central banks to stop raising interest rates or start cutting them before inflation is fully crushed, sowing the seeds of a stagflationary crisis. Britain, with its high proportion of mortgages on short-term fixed and variable rates, is particularly vulnerable to that risk.

Indeed, it was to take the pressure off the Bank of England to raise interest rates that Hunt felt obliged to cancel Liz Truss's tax cuts and raise £30 billion of new taxes. That was good news for mortgage holders, but whether it will be enough to spare Britain a painful recession is out of his hands.

Ryan Bourne

This new version of austerity squeezes only the private sector

Much has been written about how Jeremy Hunt's autumn statement repudiated Trussonomics by embracing deficit reduction. Less noted is the clear break from the Cameron-Osborne austerity agenda.

The 2010s deficit reduction plan comprised 80 per cent government spending cuts and 20 per cent tax rises, in line with international best practice. Hunt either thinks this weighting wrong, or that there's not as much government fat today to trim. His new "balanced plan" for reducing borrowing by £62 billion over five years will be a 50-50 split between cuts and tax hikes.

At least, that's what's advertised. Yet Hunt can only fully control policy decisions before a general election. From now to 2024-25, Office for Budget Responsibility data shows his entire £19.3 billion proposed deficit reduction will be delivered through higher taxes. Public spending will actually increase prior to polling day.

'Hunt's entire £19.3bn proposed deficit reduction to 2025 will be delivered through higher taxes'

So much for balance. Not only has Hunt opted to push two-thirds of the overall pain into the uncertain post-election neverland, but all the tough £31 billion of spending restraint will supposedly come after 2025.

What we really face immediately, then, is private sector austerity: new announced tax raids on energy and electricity generator profits, the top 10 per cent of earners, and work (through a frozen employers' national insurance threshold).

This estimated £20 billion of new tax hikes in two years significantly understates the pinch, too, because the huge "inflation tax" associated with Rishi Sunak freezing the income tax and national insurance thresholds, dragging people into ever-higher marginal tax rate bands, was already baked in. Combined, we will face the highest tax burden since the Second World War.

Given this evident prioritisation of public spending over taxpayers, how credible is it that Hunt will suddenly start wielding the axe after 2025?

If 2010 is anything to go by, neither major party will be upfront about any tough spending decisions during the 2024 election. With growing demands on healthcare, the state pension and social care affecting the older demographic most likely to vote, the risk is surely of additional spending promises paid for by yet higher taxes.

Former Tory cabinet minister Esther McVey asked this week: "If a Conservative government with a sizeable majority, in a time of financial pressure, won't cut public expenditure to start living within our means, then when on earth will that ever happen?" Surely not in the aftermath of an unexpected, narrow Tory election win.

At a Centre for Policy Studies briefing on Tuesday, OBR chairman Richard Hughes explained that as spending rounds are thrashed out, £20 billion to £30 billion of expenditure typically gets added to grease the wheels for an agreement that satisfies the whole cabinet. This uplift is similar in magnitude to the savings Hunt promises to make post-election. Again, the smart money is on these promised spending cuts being eroded away by politics, either before or after the election.

Yes, Labour are favourites to win a majority. Perhaps they will ape Tony Blair and Gordon Brown in swallowing tough Tory spending plans to signal their own fiscal *bona fides* for a few years? That's the trap Hunt is setting up — but it seems unlikely to work. Labour's only consistent message for a decade has been for higher public spending, funded by taxing "the rich" more. If they give that up, what are they for?

Hunt must hope the OBR is being overly pessimistic, given it models market expectations for the path of interest rates. If these estimates prove too high (as the Bank believes they are), then less deficit reduction will be needed anyway.

In the meantime, don't be fooled by Hunt's talk of a "balanced plan". The big tax hikes are guaranteed. The spending cuts in three to five years' time? Not so much.

Ryan Bourne is R Evan Scharf chair for the Public Understanding of Economics at the Cato Institute and author of the recent book Economics in One Virus



THE TIMES

Business briefing

With inflation hitting fresh highs, war raging in Ukraine, central banks raising rates at a rapid pace and the cost of oil and gas yo-yoing, markets are going through a very volatile phase as British companies scramble to cope with the effects of soaring costs. With the situation changing by the



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Jupiter urges Aveva to reject takeover bid

James Hurley

A fresh objection has been expressed to the French takeover of Aveva, the UK software company, with another investor saying it had reservations ahead of a vote on the deal.

Jupiter, the asset manager, said it would be "good for London and long-termism if voters said no" to Paris-based Schneider Electric's £9.9 billion offer as concerns mount about the UK losing one of its few remaining listed technology companies.

This month, Schneider was forced to improve its September £31-a-share cash bid to £32.25, after shareholders expressed dissatisfaction. The French industrial group, a majority shareholder of Aveva since 2017, said the 4 per cent uplift was "final". But immediately after the increase, one shareholder called it "pretty weak" and a senior City source said it was "cheeky" and still "too low".

£9.9bn
Schneider Electric's offer for Aveva

A meeting to vote on the deal takes place tomorrow. Most shareholders have already voted online.

Schneider's bid is structured as a scheme of arrangement requiring 75 per cent support from minority shareholders, so could be blocked with a relatively small investor rebellion.

Davidson Kempner, a top-five investor with a 4.8 per cent holding, had said the bid "substantially undervalues" Aveva's prospects and called the offer "highly opportunistic" in a difficult market for tech stocks.

Aegon Asset Management has also said Schneider's bid had been timed for when the Aveva "share price is depressed" thanks both to market conditions and its "complex transition to a subscription model". On the day Schneider announced its initial offer, another investor, M&G, said it was "materially underwhelmed".

New York-based Davidson Kempner — which has the largest holding of those that have spoken out — has been quiet since the offer was increased, and Schneider hopes any campaign against the deal has lost momentum. In a boost to the deal's chances, Patrick Kennedy, founder of software company OSIsoft and a 4.2 per cent Aveva shareholder, agreed to vote in favour. Aveva bought OSIsoft, a US rival, last year.

Canada's Mawer Investment Management has reduced its position since it expressed opposition to the deal.

One shareholder, who asked not to be named, said: "It will be incredibly difficult to stop this deal now."

Yesterday Schneider confirmed it had "sufficient resources" to complete the takeover. But Jupiter investment manager Richard Buxton told the Daily Mail "the increase on November 11 from Schneider wasn't much". He said "the question is, will holders want to turn them down and stick it out as a minority?". Schneider feels its offer is fair and attractive in the context of what has been a tough year for Aveva.

Aveva, spun out of Cambridge University in the 1960s, develops purpose-built software for projects including nuclear power plants, oil rigs and factories.

Aveva's independent committee, advised by Lazard, JP Morgan Cazenove and Numis, "unanimously" recommended that investors accept Schneider's revised bid, calling the terms "fair and reasonable". They equate to a 47 per cent premium to the pre-offer price.

Schneider provides automation and software services, including systems to help businesses improve energy efficiency in buildings and factories. Schneider and Aveva both declined to comment.



Johnson Matthey needs catalyst after Chinese lockdown

Profits at Johnson Matthey fell by almost a third in the first half of the year as supply chain disruption slowed production by carmakers (Alex Ralph writes).

The FTSE 250 manufacturer, which makes catalytic converters for vehicles, said its underlying operating profit fell 30 per cent to £222 million in the six months to the end of September. Profits were also hit by weaker metals prices and a lag in recovering cost inflation from customers.

Johnson Matthey, which raised prices this year to combat rising costs, has faced supply disruptions due to Covid-19 lockdowns in China, while the auto industry has been hindered by semiconductor chip shortages and disruption from the war in Ukraine.

Sales rose 5 per cent to £2 billion during the period and Johnson



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CFOTO/GETTY IMAGES



Johnson Matthey has faced disruption as China's Covid-19 lockdowns tighten the squeeze on supplies

Matthey forecast an improved group performance in the second half of year on higher automotive production and easing supply pressures. It forecast underlying operating profit for the full year to be within the City's range of expectations of between £458 million and £516 million.

Liam Condon, its chief executive, said: "We are focused on further recovery of cost inflation, which we expect to benefit the second half of the year." Shares in Johnson Matthey rose 38p, or 1.9 per cent, to £20.71 after a large fall earlier in the session.

The company is in the midst of a restructuring after it was hit last year by a surprise and costly exit from its electric car battery materials business, which led to the removal of its chief executive and its relegation from the FTSE 100. Under Condon, 54, its chief executive since March, it launched a programme to save £150 million in annual costs by 2024-25.

On a statutory basis, it generated a profit before tax of £188 million, compared with a loss of £4 million a year earlier, when it was hit by the impairment from the battery business exit.

De La Rue is 'saved', claims chief executive, despite profit warning

Alex Ralph

The continued turnaround of De La Rue has saved the 209-year-old company, its chief executive has insisted, despite issuing its third profit warning this year.

Shares in De La Rue closed down 23p, or 23 per cent, at 77p, on the London Stock Exchange after it cut its annual profit forecast, weakened by a downturn in the banknote industry.

De La Rue, based in Basingstoke, Hampshire, was founded as a print business by Thomas De La Rue in 1813 and Clive Vacher has been leading the company's latest turnaround attempt since he was parachuted in as chief executive in October 2019.

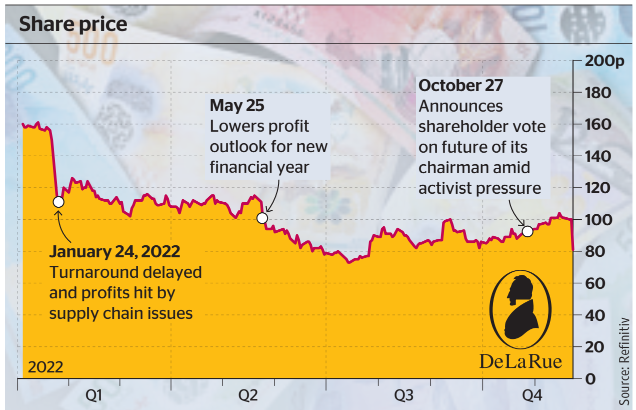
Vacher has been focused on cutting costs and reviving its currency division, which provides finished banknotes, polymer substrate and security features to more than half the central banks and issuing authorities around the world. It also has an authentication business, providing tax stamps to governments for products such as tobacco and alcohol, and security features on passports.

De La Rue cut its full-year adjusted operating profit forecast to between £30 million and £33 million — below forecasts among City analysts of about £36 million.

Revenue in its currency division in the six months to September 24 was down 12.3 per cent to £116.4 million due to a subdued market as "inflation, pressure on government finances caused by the cost-of-living crisis and, in some cases, access to foreign exchanges delay new banknote contracts, and central banks work through the stock built up at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic".

However, Vacher, 52, said that the turnaround of the currency division had "broken the historic trend of losses in a downcycle and remains profitable even in a very tough operating environment".

He also said inflation was driving demand for banknotes in some countries but it was "too soon to know if this is the start of a trend".



Revenue in its authentication business rose 2.5 per cent to £45.5 million in the first half of the year, benefiting from sales of data pages for the Australian passport as well as contracts with Bahrain, Oman and Qatar for tobacco products. It helped offset lower volumes of Covid-19 vaccine labels.

Despite the profit warning, Vacher said that "over the course of the last two and a half years implementing De La Rue's turnaround plan, we have dealt with significant legacy issues and created a company that is well positioned to weather" the storm.

Vacher said he remained confident that De La Rue would, in its next financial year, be a free cash-generating business on a sustainable basis, after pension payments, and deliver improved underlying earnings.

"I would call it a work in progress. I have no question that the turnaround plan saved the company and that we are much more resilient."

The slide in De La Rue's shares, however, left them down 63 per cent since Vacher took charge.

The accounting warning was seized on by Crystal Amber, one of De La Rue's largest shareholders., which is campaigning to remove Kevin Loosemore as chairman in a shareholder vote next week.

The company and investor are in a renewed dispute over De La Rue's strategy and after Loosemore allegedly accused Crystal Amber of market manipulation.

Richard Bernstein at Crystal Amber, which owns almost 10 per cent of the company, said: "Our analysis is that unless there's an immediate change of course, in the spring, we'll have profit warning number four.

"Kevin Loosemore needs to fall on his sword and the company needs to immediately implement a strategic review, which may include a formal sale process."

Vacher said that the dispute was an "unwelcome distraction". He said: "We are laser focused on driving all the further improvements that we know we can do to this business. But I don't think it's going to last particularly long. We've got another week preparing for it, and then we'll move on."

Move to oust Purplebricks chairman

Tom Howard

Shareholders in Purplebricks will vote on whether to oust the hybrid estate agent's long-term chairman in the week before Christmas after an activist investor forced a general meeting.

Lecram Holdings, which has built a 5.2 per cent stake in Purplebricks this year, has been agitating for the removal of Paul Pindar since the summer.

The activist, led by the property investor Adam Smith, has blamed Pindar, who used to run Capita, the outsourcing group, for the company's "disastrous" performance in recent years.

Purplebricks shares have lost two-thirds of their value over the past year as it missed out on the most buoyant property market since before the 2008 global financial crisis. They closed at a fresh record low of 10p, 90 per cent below their debut price seven years ago.

Lecram wrote to the Purplebricks board two weeks ago, demanding that investors be given a say on whether Pindar remains in his position.

The company has confirmed that a general meeting will be held on December 19, at which shareholders will vote on whether to remove Pindar and replace him with Harry Hill. Hill, 74, ran estate agent Countrywide for 20 years before selling it to Apollo, the US private equity firm, in 2007 for £1 billion.



Purplebricks lost £34.8 million last year, burning through £600,000 a week

"The board unanimously recommends that you vote against both resolutions," Purplebricks said in its letter to shareholders.

Unlike traditional estate agents, Purplebricks has no high street presence and it takes no commission from any deals it brokers. Instead, it charges sellers a flat fixed fee of £1,999 in London and £1,199 across the rest of the UK.

While other agents were making more money than they had done for years in 2021, Purplebricks fell to a pre-tax loss of £34.8 million last year, during which it was burning through almost £600,000 a week.

Its new chief executive, Helena Marston, has already shaken up the business by scrapping a money-back guarantee, slashing costs and firing a number of underperforming agents. She is expected to set out more details of her turnaround plan when Purplebricks publishes its annual results in early December.

The company's biggest shareholder is Axel Springer, the German publishing house, which owns 26.5 per cent of the shares and has already committed to backing Pindar at next month's vote.

"The market has lost confidence in the leadership," Lecram said. "It is clearly time for a change at the top at Purplebricks before it is too late."

Credit Suisse faces big loss as clients withdraw billions

Patrick Hosking Financial Editor

Clients of Credit Suisse pulled out tens of billions of pounds in the third quarter, raising fresh concerns about the embattled, scandal-hit bank.

Shares in the bank sank by 6 per cent to SwFr3.62 (£3.20), which was far lower than in the depths of the banking crisis, as it warned that it expected to make a heavy loss in the fourth quarter.

Credit Suisse said it had seen an outflow of 6 per cent of its wealth management assets in the third quarter, which analysts estimated could amount to an SwFr84 billion outflow from defecting clients.

"The massive net outflows in wealth management … are deeply concerning — even more so as they have not yet reversed," Andreas Venditti, an analyst at Vontobel, said. "CS needs to restore trust as fast as possible, but that is easier said than done."

Shareholders yesterday approved a planned SwFr4 billion capital raising to stabilise the bank, which the chairman, Axel Lehmann, 63, said was a "further positive step in building the new Credit Suisse".

Switzerland's second-biggest bank has been hit by a string of scandals and disappointments, including a $5.5 billion loss from the collapse of the US hedge fund Archegos. It had to freeze $10 billion worth of supply chain finance funds linked to the collapsed British finance house Greensill. It was also fined for fraud and corruption in Mozambique.

It said that outflows in wealth management had reduced "substantially" from a high point in the first two weeks of October but had yet to reverse.

It signalled it expected to make a fourth-quarter pre-tax loss of SwFr 1.5 billion, which would be substantially worse than the SwFr342 million loss in the third quarter. The bank has lost SwFr1.94 billion so far this year.


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Source: Surviving Economic Abuse found that "95% of domestic abuse victims experience at least one form of economic abuse".

Living costs put brake on Halfords profits

Halfords has warned that full-year profits will be at the lower end of forecasts as costs rise and cash-strapped consumers spend less on non-essential items (Russell Hotten writes).

The bike and car parts retailer is rapidly expanding its vehicle servicing operation, Autocentre, and said this arm was performing strongly, but shop sales have been hit hard by the cost of living squeeze.

Pre-tax profit in the six months to September 30 was £29 million, down from £57.9 million a year ago. The previous year's results were boosted by £9.2 million of business rates relief.

Revenues rose 10.2 per cent to £765.7 million over the first half but retail like-for-like sales were 6 per cent lower as consumers cut spending on bikes. It meant that full-year underlying pre-tax profits would be at the lower end of previous guidance for between £65 million and £75 million, the company said.

Halfords was granted essential retailer status during the pandemic and performed strongly coming out of Covid-19 as commuting and travel returned, but it has since been hit by inflation, higher energy costs and the weaker pound.

Graham Stapleton, chief executive, said the cautionary guidance was because it had become "so difficult" to predict what might happen to consumer spending.



ALAMY

Bike sales dipped 6 per cent as consumers cut back on non-essentials, said Halfords as profits were predicted to drop

Spending on non-essentials would continue to be weak, Stapleton said, adding that Black Friday and Christmas trading was revealing trends such as "practical gifting" on products such as tools and also children's bikes.

There was continued strong growth in its car servicing and motoring business, with service-related sales accounting for 42.6 per cent of group revenues. This is expected to rise to more than 50 per cent in the next financial year thanks to its recent acquisition of Lodge Tyre.

Halfords is the UK's largest provider of motoring services with more than 600 garages and nearly 700 vans, and has been expanding fast in these "needs-based" areas. "Customers will always have to have MoTs and regular serving," Stapleton said.

However, this growth has resulted in a shortage of car mechanics so Halfords has launched a recruitment drive to find 1,000 technicians on top of the 3,000 it employs. It is targeting women and retirees, as well as ex-offenders. Stapleton insisted these were new jobs: "We have been turning work away. This is a very significant increase in net-new jobs."

Shares initially fell 15 per cent on the results but later recovered and were down 14¼p, or 6.6 per cent, to 199½p.

Under-fire pharma boss steps down 'temporarily'

Alex Ralph

A healthcare company boss who was facing disqualification proceedings over drug price rises has temporarily stepped down.

Alliance Pharma said Peter Butterfield, 47, its chief executive, was "taking time away from the business for personal reasons" and was expected to return in January.

The company declined to comment further on his departure, which was announced alongside a profit warning that triggered a sell-off in its stock. Shares in Alliance closed down 25½p, or 42 per cent, at 35¼p, their lowest since 2015.

The Competition & Markets Authority began court proceedings in September to disqualify seven executives after a Times investigation exposed price rises on an anti-nausea drug used by chemotherapy patients. The cost rose from less than £6.50 a packet to more than £51 between 2013 and 2017, costing the NHS millions a year.

The executives facing disqualification include John Dawson, 73, Alliance's founder and former chief. The watchdog fined several companies a total of £35 million for their role in illegally fixing the market for prochlorperazine 3mg dissolvable tablets, taken for migraines and nausea.

Alliance Pharma has said it "fundamentally disagrees with the CMA's actions, in relation to the findings against the company and in applying" to disqualify Butterfield. It has appealed against the regulator's decision and its £7.9 million fine with a hearing due at the competition appeal tribunal in June.



Peter Butterfield, chief of Alliance Pharma, is facing disqualification over a rise in drug prices

Alliance has said that disqualification proceedings against Butterfield will go ahead only if the tribunal upholds the regulator's findings.

The company said in September that it "did not participate in, or profit from, any market sharing arrangement and refutes any involvement by the company or Mr Butterfield, who retains the full confidence and support of the board." He has been a director since 2010 and was appointed chief executive in May 2018.

Alliance, based in Chippenham, Wiltshire, and quoted on Aim, the London Stock Exchange's junior market, has marketing rights to about 80 brands. It employs about 250 people across Europe, North America, and the Asia Pacific region.

Andrew Franklin, its chief financial officer, has taken on Butterfield's responsibilities.

Alliance cut its profit forecasts, saying some larger orders, outlined at its interim results update in September, "will not materialise" because of a slower recovery in demand from business customers in China for Kelo-Cote, a scar treatment, and a "one-off destocking effect".

Alliance added: "Overall, the rest of the business continues to trade in line with the company's expectations."

Revenues this year are expected to be at least £170 million and underlying profit before tax at least £30 million, compared with about £43 million expected by City analysts.

United Utilities turns on the dividend tap

Tom Saunders

United Utilities Group, which provides water and wastewater services in northwest England, has reported strong interim profit growth after a swing back into net finance income.

The Warrington-based company posted a half-year pre-tax profit of £426.3 million in the six months to the end of September, compared to £212.7 million a year before.

However, this mostly reflects a £255 million decrease in reported net finance expense, including fair value movements. It reported a £136 million net finance income, compared to a £119 million net finance expense a year ago. Revenue was down by 1.4 per cent to £919.3 million from £932.3 million previously, but the interim dividend was raised by 4.6 per cent to 15.17p, up from 14.50p. The utility company said it expects revenue to be 1 per cent down for the full year, driven by lower consumption than predicted.

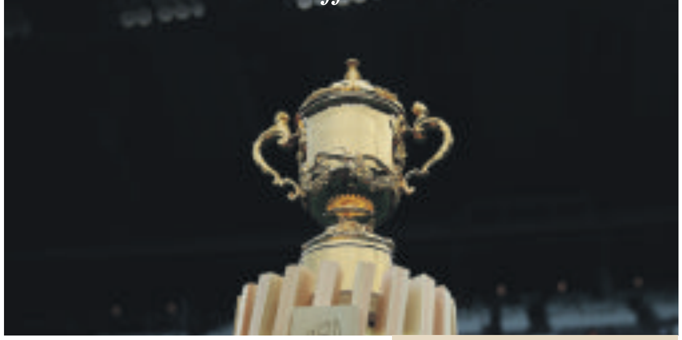
United Utilities suffered three big pipe bursts during the summer leading to a one-off £8 million cost as the company paid compensation to its customers and fixed the leaks. Despite these, the company reported a 29 per cent reduction in spills compared to a baseline of 2020 and was awarded a four-star environmental rating by the Environment Agency.

The biggest cost stemmed from inflation. Like many businesses, the company has felt the impact of rising prices, which it estimated has led to a £36 million increase in input costs.

Steve Mogford, chief executive, said: "During a difficult macro environment we have shown both operational and financial resilience."

Shares in United Utilities closed up by 18½p, or 1.8 per cent, at £10.52.

TIMES Travel Offers



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ABTA Travel with confidence

Why the postal strikes are delivering big problems for small businesses

The UK is one of the most advanced e-commerce markets in the world. Small businesses in particular have started and scaled their retail operations thanks to a sophisticated online economy which gives shoppers what they need, when they need it.

But right now in the midst of peak trading the ongoing postal strikes are causing further enormous damage to these businesses, who rely on an efficient mail service for so much of their trade. These strikes are delivering a body blow to UK small businesses, many of whom are already fighting to survive.

While we understand and respect the perspectives on both sides, more must be done to support small businesses caught in the crosshairs, and especially as these strikes are taking place during the most important trading period of the year.

For our part, we as organisations who represent the interests of small businesses, are doing everything we can to support online sellers through the peak trading season. But the most important thing right now is to keep Britain trading.

We implore Royal Mail and the Communications Workers Union to find a way through the impasse to agree a deal.

So many small businesses depend on Royal Mail and its dedicated workforce. Let's not let them down.

Yours faithfully,

Murray Lambell, VP and General Manager, eBay UK

Martin McTague, National Chair, Federation of Small Businesses

Michelle Ovens, Founder, Small Business Britain

Made.com owed its customers £17.1m

Helen Cahill

Made.com, the online furniture retailer, collapsed into administration owing customers £17.1 million, new documents have revealed.

A report on the finances published by administrators at PwC has calculated that the company went bust owing a total of £186.6 million to unsecured creditors including about 12,000 customers and suppliers.

These include Google, Facebook and the operator of the group's Antwerp warehouse. Thurrock council, which includes Tilbury docks where the company leased more than 500,00 sq ft of warehouse space, is owed £658,000, and Islington council is owed £110,000.

PwC has said it expects to pay out only 1.6p in the pound to those creditors after satisfying Made.com's main lender, Silicon Valley Bank, and its preferred creditors, which include employees and HM Revenue & Customs, which is owed £3.6 million.

PwC said: "We know that this will seem unfair to many customers ... We would advise anyone affected to check their debit and credit card purchase protection agreements. We are sharing information with a major merchant services provider, enabling them to process refunds."

Bankers running the ill-fated float of Made.com received about £10 million in fees when it floated in London , heralded as the future of furniture retail with a valuation of £775 million. JP Morgan, Morgan Stanley and Liberum Capital shared the payout when they assisted with the initial public offering in June last year.

About 4,500 items already manufactured and shipped before the firm's collapse are expected to be delivered.

Customers have been encouraged to seek payment for goods that will not be delivered by making a claim with their credit or debit card provider rather than relying on a payout from Made.com's administration.

Next has acquired Made.com's brand and websites for £3.4 million, but hundreds of the retailer's employees have lost their jobs. Nicola Thompson, who was chief executive when the company collapsed this month, said the brand was "much-loved" but the economic environment that had helped it grow in the pandemic subsequently vanished.

Customers who paid by credit card for an item worth more than £100 can claim back the money from their lender under Section 75 of the Consumer Credit Act. Debit card users may be able to make a claim under chargeback by contacting their debit card provider and giving details of the transaction to be refunded.

In their report, PwC's administrators said: "The directors explored numerous options to try to turn the business around ... However, despite their best efforts, all interested parties withdrew their solvent offers."

BRITVIC



The hot weather and easing of Covid curbs boosted sales at the soft-drink maker

Summer sun sees Britvic results shine

Dominic Walsh

The weather may have now turned cold, but Britvic reported a jump in annual revenue and profit on the back of the hot summer and the easing of Covid curbs.

The soft drinks group behind Robinsons and J2O raised revenues by 15.5 per cent to £1.62 billion in the year to September 30. Pre-tax profits leapt by 45.3 per cent to £140.2 million.

The company said the strength of its brands had enabled it to limit the impact of inflation by raising prices and honing its promotional strategy.

Simon Litherland, 58, the chief executive, said Britvic had "delivered excellent results . . . in the face of significant headwinds" but he acknowledged that "inflationary pressures on our consumers, customers and suppliers".

On an adjusted basis, operating profit rose by 16 per cent to £206 million, with the operating margin ticking up from 12.6 per cent to 12.7 per cent. A final dividend of 21.2p, made a total for the year of 29p, up 19.8 per cent.

In its core Great Britain division, volumes grew by 5.5 per cent and revenue jumped by 15.1 per cent to £1.1 billion. All its big brands performed strongly, with Pepsi, 7UP and Tango showing double-digit revenue growth, while Fruit Shoot and J2O grew by 15.1 per cent and 32.3 per cent respectively. Shares rose 5½p, or 2 per cent, to close at 784½p.



Emma Powell **Tempus**

Buy, sell or hold: today's best share tips



Pet chain in doghouse as sales slow

PETS AT HOME

Dividend yield	Half-year profit
3.88 per cent	£59.2 million

The Pets at Home boss, Lyssa McGowan, has been in charge for only six months. Her first task? Convince the market that profit growth will speed up again next year in the face of inflated operating costs and dwindling consumer spending.

The retailer has been hit by higher freight and energy costs and a slowdown in sales growth, which boomed during lockdown as customers splurged spare cash on pets. Adjusted profits over the 28 weeks to October 13 fell 9 per cent to £59.2 million, which means the company is banking on trading during the second half doing the heavy lifting to hit guidance for pre-tax profits of £131 million.

Pets at Home was a pandemic-era winner, priced for racy growth. Investors have become more cautious in the face of double-digit inflation, and that's aside from the challenges buffeting the retailer's margins. The shares are priced at just under 15 times forward earnings, down from a peak of almost 30 towards the end of 2020 and below the average of 16 since the company's float in 2014. But that reading might be too harsh. Spending on integrating its retail, veterinary and services, such as grooming, on to one website will weigh on profits this year, as will the cost of opening a new distribution centre early next year. But a capital expenditure bill of £100 million is expected to represent a peak. The rationale for spending on its digital operations is sound: increase the amount of revenue from each customer.

Freight costs have come down and management reckons rates will fall to pre-pandemic levels during the second half of the financial year.

The cost of heating and lighting its vast stores is a bigger headwind. The group's fixed tariff ended in January and it hasn't hedged its energy exposure. The energy bill is expected to total £22 million this year, compared with £8.5 million last year. That should wipe about £8 million from profits in the second half, in addition to £5 million in the first six months. Cutting rents by roughly 25 per cent on leases as they are renewed is one mitigating factor.

Like-for-like revenue growth of just over 6 per cent in the first half of the year was in line with expectations and came off the back of booming sales at the same time last year.

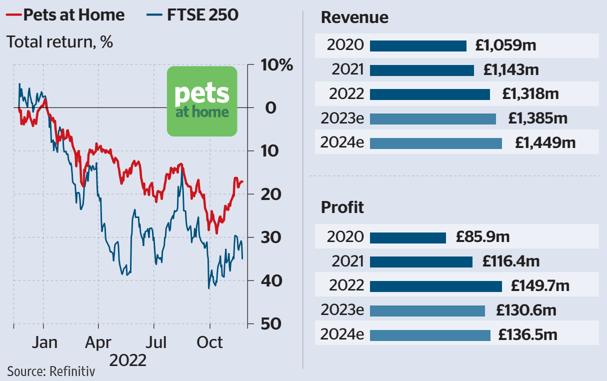
How customers respond to the rising cost of living is a bigger uncertainty. The wares Pets at Homes sells are not purely discretionary: food sales accelerated during the first half of the year, rising 15 per cent. But higher-margin sales of pet accessories fell by almost 4 per cent, which ate into the retail gross margin. Crucially, underlying profit guidance doesn't assume that revenue accelerates during the second half, prudent given pressure on customer wallets.

Subscription services such as healthcare and easy-repeat food delivery plans, which account for just under a fifth of the group's revenue, could help retain more of pet owners' pounds. Underlying growth in higher-margin veterinary services, where Pets at Home takes a fee on revenue generated by the practices, has also maintained a higher level of growth than retail.

Analysts reckon that this year will represent a trough in terms of growth and have forecast underlying pre-tax profits of £136 million for the 12 months to the end of March 2024.

Net cash position amounted to £43 million in October. That should reassure investors that the company can pay a decent dividend, which analysts at Numis think will amount to 12p a share this year, which leaves them offering a potential yield of 4.1 per cent. If this year proves to be the bottom in terms of profit growth, the shares might be stirred higher.

Animal instinct



Source: Refinitiv

ADVICE Buy

WHY A weaker valuation looks too harsh in light of the medium-term growth opportunities

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HARBOURVEST

Market cap	Discount/net asset value
£1.92 billion	38%

As investment trusts go, private equity specialists are pretty unloved. HarbourVest Global Private Equity is a case in point, with shares trading at a 38 per cent discount to the trust's net asset value. There is good reason to be cautious towards the value placed on the underlying holdings of such trusts.

The link between assets managed by HarbourVest and private companies it seeks to mine for returns is a meandering one. HarbourVest does not invest directly; it gains exposure to investments in, and portfolios of, private companies through funds managed by the US-based HarbourVest Partners. In turn, that private equity investment manager invests in funds managed by private equity heavyweights, such as KKR.

The trust's net asset value fell just 3 per cent over the six months to the end of July, driven by a sell-off in its publicly listed holdings, which account for 8 per cent of the portfolio.

Inflation and interest rates were rising before July but not at the pace that they have since. Higher inflation and financing costs erode the value of private companies — and more highly valued technology companies in particular — a sector that accounts for about a third of HarbourVest's portfolio. A more marked fall in the trust's private holdings seems likely and is reflected in the discount embedded in the share price.

New investments outweighed the distributions received by HarbourVest over the first half of the financial year, which typically come either via IPO or when a company is bought. Activity on public markets is subdued but higher debt costs could erode the returns handed back to the trust if trade buyers barter harder.

The bedrock of HarbourVest's investments is in buyout funds, partly designed to minimise the volatility typically delivered by venture capital investments in early-stage companies. Such companies account for just over a third of HarbourVest's portfolio by value.

Over the past decade the trust has outperformed the FTSE All-World Index, generating a total return of 397 per cent but much of that was against a backdrop of anaemic interest rates and benign inflation.

ADVICE Hold

WHY The discount reflects the likelihood that the NAV will decline further

NEWS IN BRIEF

News Corp-Fox hitch

A plan to reunite News Corp with Fox Corp nearly a decade after they split is facing opposition from Independent Franchise Partners, a major shareholder in both. The London-based investment firm told a special committee of News Corp, which owns The Wall Street Journal, The Australian, The Sun, The Times and The Sunday Times, that a combination on its own would fail to realise their full value, said the WSJ. News Corp declined to comment. Independent Franchise Partners and Fox did not respond to requests for comment.

Camelot hits jackpot

Camelot said the National Lottery had "never been in better shape" after first-half revenues rose 2.6 per cent to £4.06 billion — the best half-year since its inception in 1994. Returns to good causes increased by 8.1 per cent to £956.5 million, also a record. The achievement follows the decision to award the next lottery licence to Allwyn, a Czech-owned rival. Last weekend, Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan agreed to sell Camelot to Allwyn for a rumoured £100 million.

Reach too far for Monty

A mooted merger of two of Britain's biggest newspaper groups has been scrapped after the owner of The Scotsman decided against making a bid for Mirror-owner Reach. National World, led by the publisher David Montgomery, said that there were "considerable industrial and financial advantages" to combining, but the circumstances were "not aligned to proceed any further". The group said this was despite its having backing in principle to fund a potential deal.

Goldman Sachs fined

Goldman Sachs is to pay a fine of $4 million to the Securities and Exchange Commission over the US investment bank's failure to follow environmental, social and governance policies and procedures, the regulator said yesterday. The bank's asset-management unit "had several policies and procedure failures involving the ESG research its investment teams used to select and monitor securities". The alleged misconduct took place from April 2017 to June 2018.

PRICES

Major indices

New York	
Dow Jones	34194.06 (+95.96)
Nasdaq Composite	11285.32 (+110.91)
S&P 500	4027.26 (+23.68)
Tokyo	
Nikkei 225	28115.74 n/a
Hong Kong	
Hang Seng	17523.81 (+99.40)
Amsterdam	
AEX Index	721.45 (+5.12)
Sydney	
AO	7422.40 (+46.00)
Frankfurt	
DAX	14427.59 (+5.24)
Singapore	
Straits	3255.99 (-3.57)
Brussels	
BEL20	3655.32 (+4.10)
Paris	
CAC-40	6679.09 (+21.56)

Zurich	
SMI Index	11094.46 (+20.16)
DJ Euro Stoxx 50	3946.44 (+16.54)
London	
FTSE 100	7465.24 (+12.40)
FTSE 250	19500.50 (+78.13)
FTSE 350	4140.69 (+8.33)
FTSE Eurotop 100	3411.96 (+18.40)
FTSE All-Shares	4100.46 (+8.13)
FTSE Non Financials	5024.45 (+7.48)
techMARK 100	6376.61 (+5.41)
Bargains	n/a
US$	1.2036 (+0.0145)
Euro	1.1609 (+0.0075)
£:SDR	0.98 (+0.00)
Exchange Index	78.67 (+0.38)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
CPI	126.20 Oct (2015 = 100)
RPI	356.20 Oct (Jan 1987 = 100)
RPIX	290.10 Jun (Jan 1987 = 100)
Morningstar Long Commodity	677.16 (+5.72)
Morningstar Long/Short Commod	4703.45 (+27.75)

London Financial Futures

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol	Open Int
Long Gilt	Dec 22	106.54	108.36	106.51	108.07	322276	415418
	Mar 23	104.91	106.60	104.78	106.36	126334	33065
3-Mth Sterling	Dec 22	98.820	98.825	98.790	98.806	7310	347378
	Mar 23	98.785	98.795	98.755	98.771	8310	229855
	Jun 23						
	Sep 23						
	Dec 23						
3-Mth Euribor	Dec 22	97.815	97.815	97.790	97.800	123303	701879
	Mar 23	97.175	97.175	97.140	97.155	106452	554956
	Jun 23	96.955	96.980	96.915	96.950	95643	470346
	Sep 23	96.965	96.985	96.900	96.950	98042	432671
	Dec 23	97.055	97.075	96.990	97.040	117996	386059
3-Mth Euroswiss	Dec 22	100.61	100.62	100.59	100.62	488	22748
	Mar 23						
	Jun 23						
	Sep 23						
FTSE100	Dec 22	7466.5	7505.5	7457.5	7479.0	78187	571382
	Mar 23	7480.0	7503.0	7480.0	7478.5	23	2334
FTSEurofirst 80	Dec 22				5355.5		
	Mar 23				5375.5		

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Commodities

ICIS pricing (London 7.30pm)

Crude Oils ($/barrel FOB)

Brent Physical	85.55	-3.08
BFOE(Jan)	85.47	-2.95
BFOE(Feb)	85.28	-2.56
WTI(Jan)	77.94	-3.01
WTI(Feb)	78.07	-2.66

Products ($/MT)

Spot CIF NW Europe (prompt delivery)

Premium Unld	775.00	778.00	-26.00
Gasoil EEC	912.25	913.25	-17.00
3.5 Fuel Oil	336.00	336.00	-18.00
Naphtha	652.00	654.00	-16.00

ICE Futures

Gas Oil

Dec	917.50-917.00	Mar	879.50-878.25
Jan	910.25-909.75	Apr	860.25-858.25
Feb	895.50-895.25		Volume: 594220

Brent (9.00pm)

Jan	84.61-84.59	Apr	83.79-83.76
Feb	84.33-84.31	May	83.39-83.36
Mar	84.10-84.07		Volume: 1985019

LIFFE

Cocoa

Dec	2019-2018	Mar	1822-1815
Mar	1946-1945	May	1822-1805
May	1896-1876	Jul	1880-1761
Jul	1895-1851		
Sep	1852-1842		
Dec	1944-1830		Volume: 78420

RobustaCoffee

Nov	2160-1808	Jul	1788-1770
Jan	1813-1811	Sep	1787-1740
Mar	1793-1789		
May	1785-1765		Volume: 19714

White Sugar (FOB)

Reuters		Oct	494.00-489.50
		Dec	492.00-484.10
Mar	535.40-534.30	Mar	479.60-475.90
May	528.30-523.30	May	462.90-466.60
Aug	510.40-507.40		Volume: 59859

BAKKAVOR



Rising woes at Bakkavor hit shares

Bakkavor suffered a hit to its shares after warning investors that a dispute with one of its US customers would hurt its profits (Dominic Walsh writes).

The provider of fresh prepared food said the dispute, along with other factors, would reduce its operating profits to the lower end of the range of market expectations.

The range for its 2022 results is currently for an adjusted operating profit of £88.6 million and £91.7 million, implying Bakkavor will be under consensus of £90.3 million.

While the company said its full-year profits would be within expectations, Mike Edwards, chief executive, said that it is operating in "an incredibly challenging environment".

Bakkavor had also faced the threat of industrial action at its site in Spalding, Lincolnshire, but it has reached an agreement.

Edwards plans to deliver savings of £15 million next year and £25 million on an annualised basis, at a one-off cost of £20 million. This will mean the closure of two sites in the UK.

Bakkavor employs 19,000 people at 46 sites supplying more than 3,200 products, including pizza, bread and salads, to leading grocery retailers in the UK and America, plus international food brands in China.

In a third-quarter trading update, the company said its revenue had grown by 15.3 per cent to £542.5 million, with like-for-like revenue up 12.7 per cent, largely driven by price.

Shares of Bakkavor fell 5½p, or 5.8 per cent, to 89p.

The day's biggest movers

Company	Change
Accesso Technology Group Positive trading update	16.1%
Aston Martin Lagonda Recovers losses	7.6%
DiscoverIE Group Raises interim dividend after strong profit growth	4.8%
Rotork Quarterly revenues rise	4.4%
Ocado Investors move in on recent weakness	4.2%
Petrofac Extends losses	-3.1%
Babcock International Profit-taking	-3.6%
Pets at Home Half-year profits fall	-5.1%
Home Reit Short-seller attacks company	-19.6%
Alliance Pharma Slower demand recovery	-42.0%

Dividend increase sparks interest from investors



***Jessica Newman* Market report**

Investors piled into DiscoverIE Group after the electronic components maker raised its interim dividend following a robust performance in the first half in which profits more than doubled.

The FTSE 250 group posted a pre-tax profit of £14.8 million for the six months, up 131 per cent from £6.4 million a year earlier, and sales growth of 26 per cent to £219.7 million. Its interim dividend rose by 6 per cent to 3.55p.

DiscoverIE also reported a record order book of £257 million, which it believes will begin to normalise as it starts to convert into sales during the second half of the year. Analysts at Jefferies told clients to not be surprised if the group comes in ahead of consensus early next year, adding that management's new net-zero commitment signifies progress on its targets. Shares in the company settled at a ten-month high of 914p after rising 43p, or 4.9 per cent.

DiscoverIE wasn't the only company attracting attention with impressive results. **Rotork** bubbled up the FTSE 250 because of good news that the specialist engineer enjoyed strong revenue growth in recent months due to higher prices and the introduction of supply chain improvement measures. The shares settled 12¾p, or 4.4 per cent, to 298¼p.

Good weather in the summer and a lack of lockdown restrictions boosted profits at **Britvic**, the drinks maker, which fizzed up 15½p, or 2 per cent, to 784½p. Elsewhere, strong profit growth at **United Utilities** lifted the water company's shares 18½p, or 1.8 per cent, to £10.52.

It was a lacklustre session on the wider markets as investors waited for the US Federal Reserve's latest minutes, while weak UK economic data added to fears that the economy has entered a recession. The FTSE 100 closed broadly flat, up just 12.40 points, or 0.2 per cent, to 7,465.24, while the FTSE 250 rose 78.13 points, or 0.4 per cent, to 19,500.50.

Glencore was among the blue-chips propping up London's leading share index after it said the blank-cheque company Metal Acquisition had agreed to an amended $1.1 billion deal to buy its Cobar copper mine in Australia. The deal pushed the shares 15½p, or 3 per cent, higher to 530¼p.

JP Morgan analysts opened a "positive catalyst watch" on **Whitbread**, arguing that the Premier Inn owner is a more likely candidate to "sustainably gain market share" in its domestic market. Investors shared this enthusiasm, with the shares up 73p, or 2.9 per cent, to £26.12.

Weighing on the index were the oil majors as crude prices fell sharply amid reports the G7 group of countries looked at a price cap on Russian seaborne oil. It led **Harbour Energy**'s shares to retreat 8¼p, or 2.6 per cent, to 312¼p, while **Shell** fell 26p, or 1.1 per cent, to £23.56½p.

The biggest casualty of London's largest 350 companies was **Home Reit**, which tumbled to 62¼p, falling 15¼p, or 19.6 per cent after a less-than-flattering report from the short-seller Viceroy Research.

Investors decided to sell **Genus** even though the livestock genetics company anticipates full-year profits will be in line with expectations, as concerns linger over Covid restrictions in China that are affecting demand for pork. Shares in the FTSE 250 company finished the session down 58p, or 1.9 per cent, to £30.46.

Accesso Technology jumped 108p, or 16.1 per cent, to a seven-month high of 778p, after it said full-year revenues are expected to come in no less than $138 million. The Aim-listed group provides ticketing, mobile and e-commerce services to leisure and hospitality customers.

Wall Street report

Indices rose amid hope that the pace of rate rises will moderate after minutes from the Federal Reserve meeting showed a moderation in economic conditions. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 95.96 points, or 0.3 per cent, to 34,194.06.

COMMODITIES

Price cap provokes oil jitters

Oil prices fell sharply on reports that the G7 group of nations is looking at whether to cap Russian crude between the range of $65 and $70 a barrel.

Brent crude, the international benchmark, which is up about 14 per cent in the year to date, slipped by $3.80 — more than 4 per cent — to $84.56 a barrel last night as ambassadors from the 27 EU member countries moved to tighten sanctions and Russia's ability to earn revenue from its oil exports.



Brent crude prices fell more than 4 per cent to $84.56 a barrel

About 70-85 per cent of Russia's crude exports are carried by tankers rather than pipelines.

The idea of the price cap is to prohibit shipping, insurance and re-insurance companies from handling cargoes of Russian crude around the globe, unless it is sold for no more than the maximum price set by the G7 and its allies.

As the world's key shipping and insurance firms are based in G7 countries, the price cap would make it difficult for Moscow to sell its oil — its biggest export item that accounts for about 10 per cent of world supply — for a higher price. But if the cap falls in the range being discussed, it will lie above the price Russia makes for its oil and will not have any impact on its immediate revenues.

London Grain Futures

LIFFE Wheat (close £/t)

Nov	260.00	Jan	287.25	Mar	240.00
May	259.00	Jul	unq	Volume: 1134	

London Metal Exchange

(Official)

	Cash	3mth	Dec 22
Copper Gde A ($/tonne)	7961.0-7962.0	7995.0-8000.0	7985.0-7995.0
Lead ($/tonne)	2080.0-2082.0	2095.0-2096.0	2093.0-2098.0
Zinc Spec Hi Gde ($/tonne)	2891.0-2892.0	2900.0-2902.0	2848.0-2853.0
Alum Hi Gde ($/tonne)	2363.0-2364.0	2389.0-2391.0	2455.0-2460.0
Nickel ($/tonne)	25850.0-25900.0	25875.0-25925.0	26575.0-26625.0
Tin ($/tonne) (15mth)	21990.0-21995.0	21990.0-21995.0	20850.0-20900.0

Gold/Precious metals (US dollars per ounce)

Because of a technical issue, the gold fix prices are from Tuesday.

Bullion: Open $1741.84
Close $1743.26-1743.47 **High** $1745.93
Low $1732.58
AM $1747.00 **PM** $1742.95
Krugerrand $1725.00-2818.00 (£1433.62-2341.99)
Platinum $997.50 (£829.00)
Silver $21.32 (£17.72)
Palladium $1882.00 (£1564.10)

European money deposits %

Currency	1mth	3mth	6mth	12mth
Dollar	0.13	0.20	0.29	0.55
Sterling	3.10	3.59	4.15	0.81
Euro	0.10	0.15	0.20	0.50

Money rates %

Base Rates Clearing Banks 3.00 ECB Refi 2.00 US Fed Fd 3.75-4.00

Halifax Mortgage Rate 5.74

Treasury Bills (Dis) Buy: 1 mth 2.947; 3 mth 3.077. Sell: 1 mth 2.200; 3 mth 2.550

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Interbank Rates	3.0952	0.0000	3.5862	4.1495	0.0000
Eurodollar Deps	4.02-4.08	4.47-4.53	4.77-4.83	5.21-5.29	5.60-5.75

Sterling spot and forward rates

Mkt Rates for	Range	Close	1 month	3 month
Copenhagen	8.5487-8.6604	8.6286-8.6298	139ds	462ds
Euro	1.1646-1.1497	1.1605-1.1603	15pr	44pr
Montreal	1.5883-1.6171	1.6126-1.6128	7pr	20pr
New York	1.1871-1.2077	1.2032-1.2033	7pr	26pr
Oslo	11.958-12.037	11.986-11.989	26ds	28ds
Stockholm	12.601-12.659	12.611-12.614	204ds	859ds
Tokyo	167.75-168.98	168.12-168.13	54ds	175ds
Zurich	1.1294-1.1380	1.1347-1.1348	32ds	103ds

Premium = pr Discount = ds

Dollar rates

Australia	1.4899-1.4900
Canada	1.3403-1.3404
Denmark	7.1716-7.1721
Euro	0.9644-0.9645
Hong Kong	7.8190-7.8195
Japan	139.73-139.73
Malaysia	4.5720-4.5770
Norway	9.9602-9.9654
Singapore	1.3792-1.3794
Sweden	10.480-10.485
Switzerland	0.9431-0.9432

Other Sterling

Argentina peso	198.32-198.33
Australia dollar	1.7926-1.7928
Bahrain dinar	0.4502-0.4572
Brazil real	6.4803-6.4839
Euro	1.1603-1.1605
Hong Kong dollar	9.4077-9.4087
India rupee	98.337-98.361
Indonesia rupiah	18819-18819
Kuwait dinar KD	0.3692-0.3716
Malaysia ringgit	5.5055-5.5115
New Zealand dollar	1.9326-1.9331
Singapore dollar	1.6586-1.6606
S Africa rand	20.489-20.500
U A E dirham	4.4281-4.4283

Exchange rates

	Bid	Change
Australia $	1.795	+0.01
Canada $	1.614	+0.02
Denmark Kr	8.649	+0.06
Euro €	1.163	+0.01
Hong Kong $	9.434	+0.15
Hungary	476.654	+6.60
Indonesia	18926.533	+278.48
Israel Shk	4.131	+0.01
Japan Yen	168.603	+0.67
New Zealand $	1.935	
Norway Kr	12.021	-0.02
Poland	5.469	+0.03
Russia	73.147	+1.27
S Africa Rd	20.535	+0.02
Sweden Kr	12.629	-0.05
Switzerland Fr	1.137	+0.01
Turkey Lira	22.464	+0.36
USA $	1.207	+0.02

Rates supplied by Morningstar

MORNINGSTAR Data as shown is for information purposes only. No offer is made by Morningstar or this publication

NO MORE NAUSEA!
First time in the UK! The revolutionary Reliefband® Premier is a digital medical device that takes control of your sickness without drugs or delay...

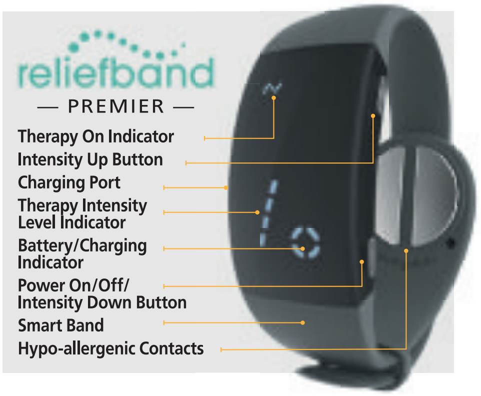
NON-DROWSY
DRUG FREE
MEDICAL DEVICE

NEW! Reliefband® 'talks' to your brain to turn off those feelings of nausea and anxiety...fast!

BIGGEST SALE of the YEAR
25% OFF
LIMITED TIME OFFER
NO CODE REQ'D

Sick —of— feeling sick?

Reliefband® is a new-to-the-UK drug-free, clinically proven wearable device that's used to treat the nausea and vomiting associated with motion sickness, physician-diagnosed migraines, anxiety, hangovers, morning sickness in pregnancy, and chemotherapy. Reliefband® can also be an effective supplementary treatment in reducing post-operative nausea.



HOW Reliefband® WORKS

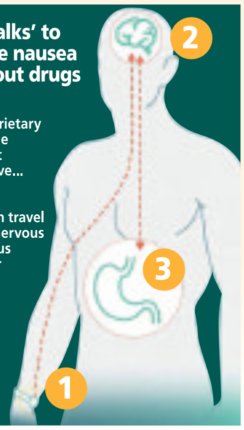
3 SIMPLE STEPS TO CORRECTLY FIT YOUR Reliefband®



1. **Find the Area** First, measure two finger widths from the first crease in your wrist
2. **Apply the Gel** Apply a small drop of the conductivity gel and spread in a coin-sized circle
3. **Adjust & Activate** Place device, fasten and power-on. Adjust senstivity until you feel a tingle in your palm.

How Reliefband® 'talks' to your brain to relieve nausea and vomiting without drugs

1. **From Your Wrist** Reliefband® generates proprietary programmed pulses from the underside of the device that stimulates your median nerve...
2. **To Your Brain** This generates signals which travel via your body's peripheral nervous system to the central nervous system and on to the higher emetic centre of the brain...
3. **To Your Stomach** The signals modulate the natural neural pathways between the brain and stomach to restore normal gastric rhythm and relieve nausea and vomiting.



Get fast relief with NO Medication and NO Drowsiness

The all-new Reliefband® Premier has a wide range of intensity settings which adjust at the touch of a button to whatever level of anti-sickness therapy you need at any given time.

18HRS THERAPY ON A SINGLE CHARGE

And it won't let you down, either! Reliefband® Premier delivers 18 hours of continued mid-intensity use on a single charge. And the on-screen charge indicator means you'll never be left on empty!

An adjustable smart strap features a keeper loop and adjusts to fit all wrist sizes – from 4.5" to 9.25" (11.5cm-23.5cm).

100% DRUG- AND SIDE-EFFECT FREE!

Reliefband® uses FDA-cleared, CE-approved, doctor-recommended and hospital-tested technology indicated for the prevention and treatment of nausea associated with all types of motion sickness. Unlike patches, medicine, and tablets, Reliefband® is drug-free, non-drowsy, and works before or after the onset of symptoms.

The device has even been shown to help with sickness as a result of virtual reality gaming, amusement park rides, and post-operative care.

HOW IT WORKS

Reliefband® releases a specific pattern of pulses that stimulate the median nerve under the skin. The pulses create a signal sent through your body's nervous system to the part of your brain that controls nausea, normalizing nerve messages from the brain to the stomach and relieving the symptoms of nausea and vomiting.

Reliefband® works for 85% of consumers, according to our clinical trials.

WHAT YOU GET

The rechargeable Reliefband® Premier comes with a tube of hypoallergenic conductivity gel, the USB charging cable and a full user manual.

25% OFF...ACT NOW!

Get 25% off when you order Reliefband® Premier today. Order with complete confidence thanks to the risk-free 30-day money back guarantee and free UK delivery.

To take advantage of our *Biggest Sale of the Year*, call free on 0800 702 2901 or visit www.reliefband.co.uk. No code required!

"Ideal in pregnancy as I do not want to put drugs into my body"

Don't just take our word for it... here's what our customers say:

Pam Gary uses Reliefband® for TRAVEL SICKNESS
"Beats any patch or pill hands down — I LOVE mine!"

Daniel Bailey Jr. uses Reliefband® with CHEMOTHERAPY
"Fantastic! Works for nausea due to chemotherapy"

Paige Parker used her Reliefband® during PREGNANCY
"Seriously improved my quality of life during pregnancy"

Helen Blair uses her Reliefband® for MIGRAINES
"I have ReliefBand to hand when my migraines strike!"

Order by 18th December to ensure dispatch before Christmas

For the prevention and treatment of sickness associated with:

Auto | Train | Sea/Cruise | Airplane | VR Gaming | Amusements | Pregnancy | Chemo | Post-Op* | Anxiety | Migraines' | Hangovers

LIMITED TIME OFFER
25% OFF
30-DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE & FREE UK DELIVERY

Fast, clinically-proven, drug-free relief from nausea and vomiting

Has nausea ever ruined your day? Your plans? Your trip? Whether you suffer from travel sickness, morning sickness, migraines, anxiety – it even works for hangovers – take control of your nausea in minutes with the all-new Reliefband® Premier.
Order now for 25% off, free UK delivery and a 30-day money back guarantee!

SCAN QR CODE FOR EASY ONLINE ORDERING



Call 0800 702 2901 or visit www.reliefband.co.uk

DISCOUNT AUTOMATICALLY APPLIED AT CHECKOUT – NO CODE REQUIRED

reliefband

The Times unit trust information service

ALLIANZ GLOBAL INVESTORS
Inv Serv: 020 7065 1400 Helpline: 0800 317 573

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gilt Yield A ‡@	206.01	...	+0.27	...
Strategic Bond Fund ‡@	155.28	...	+0.27	2.67
UK Corp Bond C ‡@	104.79	...	-0.78	3.87
UK Eqty C ‡@	6317.26	...	-14.91	3.28
UK Eqty Inc A ‡@	320.61	...	+0.99	4.99
UK Gwth A ‡@	7935.99	...	+39.61	...
UK Index A Inc ‡@	1423.81	...	-5.83	...
UK Mid Cap A ‡@	4654.61	...	-11.35	0.07

ARTEMIS FUND MGRS LTD
0800 092 2051
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Capital R Acc ‡@	2138.30	...	+15.07	3.24
Euro Opps R Acc ‡@	91.26	...	-0.48	...
Euro Opps R Inc ‡@	85.36	...	-0.46	...
European Growth R Acc ‡@	369.05	...	+1.62	2.22
Global Energy R Acc ‡@	45.96	...	+0.72	1.10
Global Growth R Acc ‡@	340.66	...	+2.19	1.82
Global Income R Acc ‡@	160.00	...	+1.31	4.16
Global Income R Inc ‡@	101.82	...	+0.83	4.31
Global Select R Acc ‡@	150.74	...	+0.87	...
High Income R Inc ‡@	61.43	...	+0.21	5.84
Income R Acc ‡@	506.92	...	+3.17	4.16
Income R Inc ‡@	222.23	...	+1.39	4.29
Monthly Dist R Inc ‡@	65.72	...	+0.35	4.88
Strategic Assets R Acc ‡	84.03	...	+0.06	...
Strategic Bond R M Acc ‡@	94.52	...	+0.26	3.09
Strategic Bond R M Inc ‡@	50.12	...	+0.14	3.15
Strategic Bond R Q Acc ‡@	94.35	...	+0.26	3.09
Strategic Bond R Q Inc ‡@	50.05	...	+0.14	3.14
UK Growth R Acc ‡@	652.48	...	+5.36	1.32
UK Smaller Cos R Acc ‡@	1806.84	...	+0.74	0.95
UK Special Sits R Acc ‡@	661.06	...	+4.62	1.17

AXA FRAMLINGTON UNIT MGMT LTD
Dling: 0845 602 1952 Priv Clients: 0845 777 5511

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Inc ‡@	572.40	...	-2.70	...
Gilt Acc @	201.30	211.80	+0.10	1.08
Gilt Inc @	74.35	78.24	-0.39	1.09
Health Acc ‡@	2964.00	...	+10.00	...
Jap Smlr Co Ac @	62.56	66.09	-0.19	0.30
Managed Inc ‡@	138.30	...	...	...
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	238.10	...	+1.00	4.69
UK Growth Inc ‡@	218.80	...	+1.00	0.70
UK Select Opps Inc ‡@	1921.00	...	+7.00	1.12
UK Sml Cos Inc ‡@	262.90	...	+0.60	...

AXA FUND MANAGERS LTD
Admin & Enq 0117 989 0808
AXA Trusts

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Gen Acc ‡@	2101.00	...	+6.00	...
Gen Inc ‡@	1079.00	...	-2.00	...

UK/Global Investment Companies

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Acc A ‡@	234.70	...	...	...
Extra Inc Inc B ‡@	86.74	...	+0.24	...
Global Gwth Acc R ‡@	288.10	...	+4.10	0.52
Japan Acc A ‡@	162.30	...	+2.20	1.51
Pac Gwth Acc A ‡@	479.80	...	-17.60	2.30

CIS UNIT MANAGERS LTD
08457 46 46 46

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Gwth ‡@	196.10	...	+0.20	...
Sus Leaders ‡@	758.20	...	+6.20	1.08
UK Growth ‡@	610.30	...	+3.50	2.17
UK Income ‡@	209.50	...	+1.30	5.14

CLOSE FUND MANAGEMENT LTD
0870 606 6402

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Beacon Inv ‡	84.88	...	+0.35	0.01

Dealing: 020 7426 6232

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Winchester ‡	3573.85	...	+69.49	0.91

EDENTREE INV MGMT LTD
0800 358 3010

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Resp & Sust Sterling Bond ‡	86.35	...	+0.38	...
Resp & Sust Eurp Eq ‡	303.20	...	+1.20	...
Resp & Sust Glbl Eq ‡	315.30	...	+1.20	0.08
Resp & Sust Mgd Income ‡	119.80	...	+0.10	5.20
Resp & Sust UK Eq ‡	216.40	...	+0.30	1.03
Resp & Sust UK Equity Opps ‡	270.10	...	+0.10	0.94

F & C FUND MANAGEMENT LTD (OEICS)
Enqs: 0870 601 6183 Dealing: 0870 601 6083
Share Class 1 - Retail

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bd ‡@	50.56	...	+0.29	1.64
Emerging Mkts ‡@	116.50	...	-0.50	...
Euro Gwth & Inc 1 ‡@	1132.00	...	+11.00	...
Extra Inc Bond ‡@	43.04	...	+0.06	1.86
FTSE All-Shr Track ‡@	417.20	...	+3.10	3.19
Global Gwth SC1 ‡@	311.50	...	+1.10	...
High Inc Trst @	11.20	11.81	+0.02	5.71
Max Inc Bond ‡@	42.54	...	+0.11	2.86
Multi Man Caut ‡@	70.41	...	...	3.18
Multi Man Distr ‡@	60.44	...	...	3.37
North Amer ‡@	844.70	...	+6.40	...
Pacific Gwth ‡@	469.10	...	-3.20	0.04
Strategic Bd ‡@	194.50	...	...	1.66
UK Equity ‡@	3392.00	...	+28.00	1.35
UK Gwth & Inc Acc 1 ‡@	658.50	...	...	...
UK Gwth & Inc Dist ‡@	234.70	...	...	...
UK Smaller Cos ‡@	1010.00	...	-3.00	0.20

FIDELITY INTERNATIONAL
Private Clnts 0800 414161 Broker Dlgs 0800 414181

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Spec Sits ‡@	2393.00	...	+21.00	...
American ‡@	4987.00	...	+41.00	...
Euro Opps ‡@	544.70	...	+3.40	...
European ‡@	3255.00	...	+26.00	...
Extra Income ‡@	22.74	...	+0.13	5.23
Glob Spec Sits ‡@	5434.00	...	+41.00	...
Global Focus ‡@	2883.00	...	+14.00	...
International ‡@	149.50	...	+0.20	0.08
Japan ‡@	533.30	...	+1.20	0.54
Moneybldr Bal ‡@	44.45	...	+0.26	3.81
Moneybldr Glob	327.60	327.60	-0.10	0.21
Moneybldr Gwth ‡@	76.12	...	-0.95	...
Moneybldr Inc ‡@	29.68	...	+0.17	4.48
Moneybldr UK Ind ‡@	125.74	...	+0.95	3.11
Special Sits ‡@	4429.00	...	+9.00	1.33
Wealthbuilder	69.75	72.18	+0.53	0.44

HALIFAX INVESTMENT FUND MGRS LTD
01296 386 386
Authorised Inv Funds
Share Class `C

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corporate Bond ‡@	32.33	...	+0.19	3.04
Ethical ‡@	110.80	...	+0.80	0.01
European ‡@	104.80	...	+0.80	2.05
Far Eastern ‡	109.20	...	-0.10	...
Fund of Inv Tst ‡@	136.20	...	+0.40	0.27
Intl Gwth ‡	124.10	...	+0.90	1.12
Japanese ‡	65.78	...	-0.43	1.50
North Amer ‡	149.30	...	+1.40	0.27
Smaller Cos ‡	104.80	...	-0.10	0.87
Special Sits ‡@	46.53	...	+0.39	1.61
UK Equity Inc ‡@	88.07	...	+0.67	4.57
UK FTSE 100 IT ‡@	67.74	...	+0.58	2.89
UK FTSE All-S IT ‡@	76.74	...	+0.54	2.74
UK Growth ‡@	79.60	...	+0.62	3.48

HSBC GLOBAL ASSET MGMT (UK) LTD
Enq: 0845 745 6123 Dlg: 0845 745 6126 Mon-Fri 8-6
HSBC Index Tracker Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Amer Ind Acc ‡@	922.33	...	+7.56	0.98
Amer Ind Inc ‡@	742.36	...	+6.39	0.99
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	1116.07	...	+5.66	2.53
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	713.07	...	+3.62	2.61
FTSE 100 Ind Acc ‡@	269.19	...	+2.41	3.39
FTSE 100 Ind Inc ‡@	122.28	...	+1.09	3.46
FTSE 250 Ind Acc ‡@	286.25	...	-0.51	2.47
FTSE 250 Ind Inc ‡@	176.89	...	-0.31	2.46
FTSE All-S Acc ‡@	691.64	...	+8.84	3.33
FTSE All-S Inc ‡@	349.67	...	+4.47	3.40
Jap Ind Acc ‡@	137.40	...	-0.66	...
Jap Ind Inc ‡@	107.08	...	-0.52	...
Pac Ind Acc ‡@	489.76	...	-0.35	2.88
Pac Ind Inc ‡@	308.22	...	-0.23	2.96

HSBC Investment Funds (OEIC) - Retail Share Class

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced Acc ‡@	240.67	...	+1.21	0.61
Balanced Inc ‡@	151.95	...	-0.14	...
Corp Bd Acc ‡@	263.72	...	+1.52	3.28
Corp Bd Inc ‡@	103.13	...	+0.59	3.35
Gilt & Fd Int Acc ‡@	497.78	...	+1.62	1.19
Gilt & Fd Int Inc ‡@	74.17	...	+0.24	1.58
Income Acc ‡@	684.11	...	+4.04	...
Income Inc ‡@	286.10	...	+1.69	...
Monthly Inc Acc ‡@	313.41	...	+0.77	3.21
Monthly Inc Inc ‡@	126.52	...	+0.72	4.17
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Acc ‡@	139.96	...	+0.77	4.45
UK Grth & Inc Ret B Inc ‡@	62.97	...	+0.35	4.60
UK Gth & Inc Acc ‡@	139.96	...	+0.77	4.45
UK Gth & Inc Inc ‡@	62.97	...	+0.35	4.60

HSBC Specialist Investment Funds (OEIC)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Index Retail Acc ‡@	922.33	...	+7.56	0.98
American Index Retail Inc ‡@	742.36	...	+6.39	0.99
Asian Gth Acc ‡@	147.77	...	-0.07	...
Asian Gth Inc ‡@	130.99	...	-0.06	...
Chinese Eq Acc ‡@	513.81	...	+0.27	0.40
Chinese Eq Inc ‡@	434.76	...	+0.22	0.34
Euro Gth Acc ‡@	973.97	...	+4.05	...
Euro Gth Inc ‡@	817.05	...	+3.39	...

IGNIS ASSET MGMT
Dlg: 0141 222 8282

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American Gth Inc @	322.55	340.42	-3.34	...
Balanced Growth @	262.17	276.69	-0.93	1.52
Balanced Growth Acc @	393.13	414.92	-1.40	...
Corporate Bond ‡@	99.69	...	-0.89	4.77
European Growth @	403.88	426.26	-3.57	...
European Growth Acc @	475.71	502.07	-4.21	...
Glob Gwth @	331.53	349.90	-3.09	0.12
Higher Yield @	83.98	88.64	-0.29	4.43
Higher Yield Acc @	275.04	290.28	-0.92	4.32
Japan @	49.06	51.78	-0.03	...
Managed @	130.89	138.15	-0.06	0.66
Managed Trust @	71.96	76.96	+0.17	...
Mngd Pfolio Inc @	95.54	100.84	-0.11	...
Pacific Grth @	498.71	526.34	-2.81	1.34
Smaller Comp @	756.24	798.14	+1.64	...
Smaller Cos @	628.94	663.79	+1.36	0.21

INSIGHT INVESTMENT FDS MANAGEMENT LTD
Client Servs: 0207 163 4000
Insight Investment Multi-Manager Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Well Bldr Bal Acc ‡@	96.05	...	-0.32	...
Well Bldr Gwth Acc ‡@	93.79	...	-0.36	...

INVESCO FUND MGRS LTD
Dling: 0800 085 8571 Inv Serv: 0800 085 8677
Brkr Serv: 0800 028 2121
INVESCO Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Str Inc N/Trl ‡@	323.57	...	-0.12	7.05

INVESCO PERPETUAL Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Childrens Acc ‡@	438.77	...	+2.29	...
Corp Bond Acc ‡@	195.64	...	+1.08	2.57
High Income Inc ‡@	312.96	...	+2.40	3.44
Income & Grth Inc ‡@	405.96	...	+4.33	1.78
Income Inc ‡@	1225.93	...	+9.27	3.74
Money Acc ‡@	91.53	...	+0.01	0.34
Monthly Inc Plus Inc ‡@	91.90	...	+0.38	5.03
UK Aggressive Inc ‡@	154.28	...	-0.24	...
UK Growth Acc ‡@	853.46	...	+6.10	...
UK Sml Cos Eqty Acc ‡@	1353.23	...	+3.10	0.35
UK Sml Cos Gwth ‡@	82.54	...	+0.04	...

INVESTEC FUND MGRS
Broker Support and Dealing: 020 7597 1900
OEIC Series i,ii,iii, & iv

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
American A Acc ‡@	639.07	...	+6.55	...
Asia ex Japan A Acc ‡@	705.60	...	-0.28	...
Capital Accumulator A Acc ‡@	231.48	...	-3.81	...
Cautious Managed A Acc ‡@	370.38	...	+1.19	2.09
Cautious Managed A Inc ‡@	233.92	...	+0.75	2.12
Diversified Growth A Acc ‡@	127.51	...	+0.23	0.64
Diversified Growth A Inc ‡@	135.02	...	+0.24	...
Diversified Income A Acc ‡@	313.21	...	+0.39	2.48
Diversified Income A Inc ‡@	67.42	...	+0.08	4.02
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc ‡@	109.22	...	+0.24	4.56
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Acc Gross ‡@	125.82	...	+0.20	...
Emerging Mkts Blended Debt A Inc ‡@	64.60	...	+0.14	6.60
Emerging Mkts Equity A Acc ‡@	145.83	...	+0.29	1.02
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt A Acc ‡@	175.75	...	-0.35	...
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt A Inc ‡@	70.48	...	-0.14	...
Emrg Mkts Local Curr Debt Gross I Acc ‡@	220.49	...	-0.05	...
Enhanced Natural Resources A Acc ‡@	134.24	...	-1.25	...
Global Bond A Acc ‡@	139.30	...	+4.03	0.82
Global Bond A Inc ‡@	109.33	...	+3.00	0.82
Global Bond I Gross Inc ‡@	1167.00	...	+29.78	1.25
Global Dynamic A Acc ‡@	193.61	...	+1.95	0.47
Global Energy A Acc ‡@	170.97	...	-1.14	...
Global Equity A Acc ‡@	234.62	...	+1.82	0.43
Global Franchise A Acc ‡@	303.80	...	+2.20	...
Global Free Enterprise A Acc ‡@	1171.46	...	+9.97	...
Global Gold A Acc ‡@	177.60	...	+4.06	0.59
Global Special Situations A Acc ‡@	307.57	...	+2.62	...
Global Special Situations A Inc ‡@	237.91	...	+2.03	...
Managed Growth A Acc ‡@	276.67	...	+0.15	...
Monthly High Income A Acc ‡@	243.45	...	+0.43	3.54
Monthly High Income A Inc ‡@	63.17	...	+0.01	5.01
Multi-Asset Protector A Acc ‡@	165.10	...	+0.06	...
Strategic Bond A Acc ‡@	244.54	...	+0.19	...
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡@	119.47	...	+0.09	...
Target Return A Acc ‡@	102.03	...	+0.44	0.82
Target Return A Inc ‡@	87.63	...	+0.01	0.87
UK Alpha A Acc ‡@	2542.93	...	+18.74	2.21
UK Blue Chip A Acc ‡@	770.11	...	+3.15	...
UK Smaller Companies A Acc ‡@	4677.89	...	-27.24	...
UK Smaller Companies A Inc ‡@	4195.78	...	-24.43	...
UK Special Situations A Acc ‡@	1251.68	...	+6.92	1.87
UK Special Situations A Inc ‡@	448.69	...	+2.48	1.92

For ISIS Asset Mgmt see F&C Fd Mgmt Ltd (OEICS)

JANUS HENDERSON INVESTORS
Investors Serv: 0800 832 832 Dlng: 0845 946 4646

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
All Stks Credit A Inc ‡@	115.40	...	+0.50	1.81
Asian Div Inc U Trst Inc ‡@	79.10	...	-0.09	6.79
Cautious Man Fd A Acc ‡@	280.00	...	+1.60	3.13
Cautious Man Fd A Inc ‡@	138.90	...	+0.80	3.19
China Opp Fund A Acc ‡@	1103.00	...	-3.00	...
Emg Mkts Opps Fd A Acc ‡@	190.50	...	...	...
Erpn Grth Fund A Acc ‡@	280.00	...	+1.60	...
Erpn Sel Opps Fd A Acc ‡@	2120.00	...	+13.00	1.33
Fix Int Mnthly Inc Fd Acc ‡@	28.12	...	+0.16	5.28
Global Equity Fund Acc ‡@	4353.00	...	+32.00	...
Global Equity Income A Inc ‡@	66.12	...	+0.28	3.46
Global Tech A Acc ‡@	2721.00	...	+29.00	...
Instl UK Idx Opps A Acc ‡@	111.49	...	+0.80	3.13
M-Asset Abs Ret A Acc ‡@	161.00	...	-0.50	...
M-Man Active Fd A Acc ‡@	251.90	...	-0.10	...
M-Man Inc Grth A Inc ‡@	146.10	...	+0.40	2.45
M-Man Inc Grth Fd A Acc ‡@	185.20	...	+0.50	2.41
Sterling Bond U Trst Acc ‡@	205.20	...	+1.00	1.49
Sterling Bond U Trst Inc ‡@	56.33	...	+0.28	1.51
Strategic Bond A Inc ‡@	104.20	...	+0.50	3.48
UK Abs Ret Fd A Acc ‡@	164.80	...	+0.20	...
UK Alpha Fund A Acc ‡@	135.20	...	+0.40	1.26
UK Irsh Sm Co Fd A Acc ‡@	742.50	...	-1.70	...
UK Property A Acc @	264.95	278.15	+0.01	2.63
UK Property A Inc @	105.80	111.07	...	2.68
US Growth Fund A Acc ‡@	1629.00	...	+13.00	...

JP MORGAN ASSET MGMT
OEIC

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Asia A Acc ‡@	259.00	...	+2.20	...
Emerging Mkts ‡@	261.50	...	+3.00	...
Eur Dyn (ex-UK) A Acc ‡@	270.30	...	+4.70	0.47
Euro Smllr Cos ‡@	864.00	...	+17.40	...
Europe A Acc ‡@	1734.00	...	+35.00	1.35
Gbl Hi Yld Bd A Acc ‡@	117.30	...	+1.10	5.30
Gbl Hi Yld Bd A Inc ‡@	30.89	...	+0.29	5.45
Gl ex-UK Bd A Acc ‡@	257.40	...	-0.70	...
Gl ex-UK Bd A Inc ‡@	196.80	...	-0.50	...
Glb Fins A Acc ‡@	1077.00	...	+1.00	1.03
Global A Acc ‡@	2049.00	...	+11.00	...
Japan A Acc ‡@	516.80	...	+6.20	...
Multi-Man Tst A Acc ‡@	1268.00	...	+16.00	0.57
Multi-Man Tst A Inc ‡@	1127.00	...	+15.00	0.58
Nat Resources ‡@	951.20	...	+17.30	...
New Europe A ‡@	155.70	...	+12.00	2.11
Portfolio ‡@	295.60	...	+0.40	0.98
Stg Corp Bd A Acc ‡@	85.59	...	-0.13	1.14
Stg Corp Bd A Inc ‡@	48.30	...	-0.08	1.14
UK Act 350 A Acc ‡@	199.00	...	-2.20	...
UK Dynamic Acc ‡@	206.70	...	+4.30	2.07
UK Dynamic Inc ‡@	148.20	...	+3.10	2.03
UK Equity A Acc ‡@	401.90	...	+0.60	3.45
UK Equity A Inc ‡@	46.44	...	+0.07	3.49
UK Eqy & Bd Inc Acc ‡@	167.10	...	-0.20	...
UK Eqy & Bd Inc Inc ‡@	90.29	...	-0.48	...
UK Higher Inc A Acc ‡@	1132.00	...	+7.00	...
UK Higher Inc A Inc ‡	531.30	...	+2.00	...
UK Sm Cos A Acc ‡@	563.30	...	+7.00	0.34
UK Str Eq Inc A Acc ‡@	197.90	...	+3.50	...
UK Str Eq Inc A Inc ‡@	100.50	...	+1.77	...
US A Acc ‡@	1036.00	...	+25.00	...
US Sm Cos A Acc ‡@	976.20	...	+14.00	...

JUPITER UT MGRS LTD
020 7581 3020

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Absolute Return ‡@	32.46	...	+0.02	...
Distribution and Growth ‡@	94.77	...	+0.43	2.16
Emg Euro Opps ‡@	145.34	...	-31.23	...
Euro Special Sits ‡@	426.34	...	+3.99	...
European ‡@	2714.54	...	+28.72	...
Financial Opps ‡@	709.63	...	+4.65	0.66
Income Trust ‡@	504.47	...	+1.80	4.34
Merlin Bal (Acc) ‡@	228.19	...	+1.57	2.14
Merlin Gwth (Acc) ‡	529.20	...	+6.71	...
Merlin Inc (Acc) ‡@	335.81	...	+1.41	2.73
Merlin Wwide (Inc) ‡	372.67	...	+3.65	...
UK Growth ‡@	247.38	...	+2.48	...
UK Special Sits (Inc) ‡@	200.11	...	+0.83	2.15

LEGAL & GENERAL (UT MGRS) LTD
Enquiries: 0870 050 0955 Dealing: 0870 050 0956

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Equity Acc @	2616.00	2639.00	-8.00	...
Equity Dist @	893.80	902.00	-2.70	...
Euro Ind Acc ‡@	493.10	...	+2.70	2.50
Euro Ind Inc ‡@	323.10	...	+1.80	2.56
Fixed Int Acc ‡@	130.80	...	+0.80	1.99
Fixed Int Dist ‡@	61.83	...	+0.37	2.02
Glob Gwth Acc @	243.90	243.90	-1.30	...
Glob Health Acc ‡@	111.70	...	-0.20	0.66
Glob Tech Acc ‡@	82.74	...	-1.26	0.09
Gwth Tst Acc @	106.00	106.50	-1.00	...
High Inc Acc ‡@	119.60	...	+0.40	5.57
Japan Ind Acc ‡@	67.02	...	-0.46	1.90
Pacific Ind Acc ‡@	196.40	...	...	3.34
UK 100 Ind Acc @	180.90	180.90	+0.90	...
UK Active Opps Acc @	249.90	252.90	-0.10	...
UK Index Acc ‡@	337.20	...	+2.40	3.32
UK Index Dist ‡@	162.50	...	+1.20	3.40
US Ind Acc ‡@	804.40	...	-2.80	0.69
Worldwide Acc ‡@	330.70	...	+0.70	0.60



M & G SECURITIES
Enq: 0800 390 390 Dealing Line: 0800 328 3196
Authorised Inv Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Charifund Inc ‡	1458.43	...	+1.12	5.66

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 1

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Euro Smlr Cos Acc ‡	525.29	...	-3.39	...
Euro Smlr Cos Inc ‡	462.50	...	-3.00	0.69

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 2

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Extra Income Inc ‡	696.80	...	+1.67	5.31
Gilt & Fxd Int Inc ‡	80.49	...	+0.51	...
Gl Hi Yd Bd Inc ‡	39.02	...	+0.14	5.91
Index Linked Bd Inc ‡	122.59	...	-0.20	...
Index Trckr Inc ‡	75.53	...	+0.55	3.85
Short Dated Corp Bd Inc ‡	24.83	...	+0.04	1.61
UK Select A Inc ‡	2727.86	...	+11.12	2.52

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 3

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bd A Inc ‡	33.89	...	+0.20	3.38
Dividend Inc ‡	53.49	...	+0.11	6.06
Recovery A Inc ‡	106.40	...	+0.41	3.30
Sml Cos Inc ‡	343.53	...	-1.83	2.26

Sterling Class A Investment Funds 4

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Episode Allocation A Inc ‡@	135.12	...	+0.71	2.52

MARKS & SPENCER UNIT TRUST LTD
0808 005 5555

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
High Income	86.16	86.16	-0.12	4.63
High Income Acc	238.60	238.60	-0.30	4.52
UK 100 Comp Acc @	441.60	441.60	+4.50	...
UK 100 Cos @	218.80	218.80	+2.20	3.38
UK Select Pflo @	329.50	329.50	+3.90	3.36
UK Selection Port Acc @	671.10	671.10	+8.00	...
Worldwide Mgd Acc @	929.90	929.90	+1.30	1.06
Wwide Mgd @	547.00	547.00	+0.80	1.07

MORGAN STANLEY INVESTMENT MGMT LTD
Enquires: 0800 0961 962
The Morgan Stanley Funds (UK)
Class A Shares
Equity

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Dev Opp Fund F Acc ‡@	729.49	...	-8.03	...
Dev Opp Fund I Acc ‡@	726.11	...	-8.00	...
Glob Bal Inc F F Acc ‡@	914.74	...	+1.56	5.70
Glob Bal Inc F F Inc ‡@	855.69	...	+1.46	5.90
Glob Bal Inc F I Acc ‡@	913.69	...	+1.56	5.72
Glob Bal Inc F I Inc ‡@	854.56	...	+1.46	5.92
Glob Bal Sust F F Acc ‡@	926.43	...	+0.98	1.27
Glob Bal Sust F F Inc ‡@	912.67	...	+0.96	1.28
Glob Bal Sust F I Acc ‡@	925.35	...	+0.97	1.20
Glob Bal Sust F I Inc ‡@	912.49	...	+0.96	1.21
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund F Inc ‡@	1296.97	...	+4.94	4.30
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund I Acc ‡@	1778.00	...	+6.75	4.26
Glob Br Eq Inc Fund I Inc ‡@	1389.24	...	+5.28	4.38
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	1504.22	...	+11.97	1.08
Glob Br Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	13339.72	...	+58.49	0.96
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡@	1440.75	...	+11.47	1.09
Glob Br Fund I Inc (PH) ‡@	3665.57	...	+16.08	0.96
Glob Ins Fund F Acc ‡@	501.41	...	-2.11	...
Glob Ins Fund F Inc ‡@	501.41	...	-2.11	...
Glob Ins Fund I Acc ‡@	499.46	...	-2.11	...
Glob Ins Fund I Inc ‡@	499.46	...	-2.11	...
Glob Sust Fund F Acc (PH) ‡@	1107.88	...	+9.39	1.03
Glob Sust Fund F Inc ‡@	1219.16	...	+5.81	0.92
Glob Sust Fund I Acc ‡@	1234.19	...	+5.88	0.72
Glob Sust Fund I Acc (PH) ‡@	1107.53	...	+9.39	0.81
Glob Sustain Fund F Acc ‡@	1240.28	...	+5.91	0.92
Stg Corp Bond F F Acc ‡@	118.78	...	+0.67	3.14
Stg Corp Bond F F Inc ‡@	94.61	...	+0.54	3.18
Stg Corp Bond F I Acc ‡@	2527.13	...	+14.36	3.53
Stg Corp Bond F I Inc ‡@	1340.58	...	+7.62	3.62
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F F Acc ‡@	910.47	...	+0.79	2.27
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F F Inc ‡@	880.13	...	+0.77	2.30
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F I Acc ‡@	906.92	...	+0.79	2.05
Sust Fixed Inc Opps F I Inc ‡@	879.84	...	+0.77	2.08
US Adv F F Acc ‡@	1361.18	...	-2.78	...
US Adv F F Acc (PH) ‡@	748.46	...	+1.90	...
US Adv F I Acc ‡@	1449.26	...	-2.97	...
US Adv F I Acc (PH) ‡@	784.80	...	+1.95	...

SANTANDER UNIT TST MGRS
08457 413002

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Bal Pfolio Inc ‡@	110.50	...	+0.40	...
Bal Port Gwth Acc ‡@	227.90	...	+0.50	1.11
Equity Inc Inc ‡@	195.80	...	+0.90	5.97
N&P UK Gwth Inc ‡@	182.80	...	+0.10	...
Stkmkt 100 Tkr @	255.10	255.10	+1.50	...
UK Growth Acc ‡@	441.00	...	+2.90	3.45
UK Growth Inc ‡@	235.50	...	+1.50	...

SCOTTISH MUTUAL INV MNGRS LTD
0141 248 6100

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
European Inc	1777.00	1873.48	+4.40	...
Far Eastern Inc	584.69	617.09	-0.73	1.42
Intl Growth Inc	380.56	400.59	+0.02	...
Japanese Inc	41.85	41.85	+0.43	...
Mutual European	2762.93	2908.99	-21.63	...
Mutual Far Eastern	920.29	971.28	-8.95	1.04
Mutual North Am	1983.00	2092.88	+6.23	0.24
Mutual UK Eq	1385.31	1462.07	+17.63	...
Nth American Inc	1227.65	1295.67	-7.28	...
UK Equity Inc	544.11	574.26	+6.54	3.40

SCOTTISH WIDOWS UNIT TRUST MGRS
0845 300 2244
Authorised Inv Funds (OEICs)
OEIC A Class
Managed Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Bal Port A Acc ‡@	237.60	...	+0.80	0.01
Caut Port A Acc ‡@	207.10	...	+0.30	...
Caut Port A Inc ‡@	152.00	...	+0.30	...
Opps Port A Acc ‡@	280.20	...	+1.30	...
Prog Port A Acc ‡@	266.60	...	+1.10	...

Overseas Growth Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Eur Sel Gth A Acc ‡@	3271.00	...	+28.00	...

Tracker and Specialist Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr A Acc ‡@	370.00	...	+4.00	3.39
UK Trkr A Inc ‡@	185.50	...	+2.00	3.48

UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond A Acc ‡@	283.20	...	+1.20	2.14
Corp Bond A Inc ‡@	105.70	...	+0.40	2.16
Envir Invtr A Acc ‡@	375.60	...	-1.60	...
Hi Inc Bond A Ac ‡@	226.50	...	+1.50	5.25
Hi Inc Bond A Inc ‡@	68.21	...	+0.45	5.39
Hi Res A Acc ‡@	369.90	...	+3.20	4.20
Hi Res A Inc ‡@	116.30	...	+1.00	4.30
Safety Plus A Acc ‡@	40.49	...	...	...
Strat Inc A Acc ‡@	186.50	...	+2.60	3.18
Strat Inc A Inc ‡@	82.80	...	+1.17	3.24
UK Gwth A Acc ‡@	189.00	...	+2.20	3.53
UK Sel Gwth A Acc ‡@	2158.00	...	+5.00	2.60

OEIC B Class
Tracker and Specialist Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Trkr B Acc ‡@	408.30	...	+4.30	3.50
UK Trkr B Inc ‡@	184.40	...	+2.00	3.59

UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Corp Bond B Acc ‡@	370.70	...	+0.90	...
Corp Bond B Inc ‡@	136.30	...	+0.30	...
UK Gwth B Acc ‡@	205.60	...	-0.30	...
UK Sel Gwth B Acc ‡@	2481.00	...	...	...

OEIC C Class
UK and Income Investment Funds

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
UK Gth C Inc ‡@	125.70	...	+1.40	4.15
UK Sel Gwth C Acc ‡@	2598.00	...	...	...

STANDARD LIFE INVESTMENTS
0845 279 3003
Investment Funds (OEIC) - Retail Shares

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
AAA Inc CAT Acc ‡@	89.07	...	+0.19	1.26
AAA Inc CAT Inc ‡@	50.28	...	+0.11	1.27
AAA Income Acc ‡@	96.89	...	+0.21	1.70
Amer Eq Gth Acc ‡@	213.80	...	+2.00	...
Corp Bond Acc ‡@	154.40	...	+1.00	3.22
Corp Bond Inc ‡@	52.15	...	+0.32	3.28
Euro Eq Gth Acc ‡@	239.60	...	+1.10	...
Glb Advtg CAT Acc ‡@	147.60	...	+0.50	1.01
Glob Advtg Acc ‡@	195.00	...	+0.80	0.98
Glob Eq Uncstrd Acc ‡@	154.20	...	+0.70	...
Higher Inc Acc ‡@	139.00	...	+0.60	4.59
Higher Inc Inc ‡@	43.86	...	+0.20	4.70
Japan Eq Gth Acc ‡@	127.40	...	...	...
Managed Acc ‡@	364.60	...	+1.70	0.42
Select Inc Acc ‡@	91.51	...	...	2.21
Select Inc Inc ‡@	51.26	...	-0.26	2.21
UK Eq Gth Acc ‡@	358.50	...	+3.30	2.04
UK Eq Hi Alpha ‡@	220.90	...	+2.00	3.38
UK Eq Hi Inc Acc ‡@	270.40	...	+2.30	4.50
UK Eq Hi Inc Inc ‡@	74.39	...	+0.63	4.65
UK Ethical Acc ‡@	193.50	...	+0.70	1.56
UK Opps Acc ‡@	239.10	...	+0.60	0.69
UK Opps Inc ‡@	215.90	...	+0.50	0.69
UK Smlr Cos Acc ‡@	815.10	...	-2.30	...

SVS BROWN SHIPLEY FUNDS
Enquiries: 0141 222 1151

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Balanced A Acc ‡@	131.96	...	+0.56	0.79
Balanced A Inc ‡@	118.30	...	+0.50	0.79
Cautious A Acc ‡@	109.12	...	+0.26	1.31
Cautious A Inc ‡@	94.95	...	+0.23	1.32
Dynamic A Acc ‡@	323.44	...	+1.61	0.50
Dynamic A Inc ‡@	292.17	...	+1.45	0.49
Growth A Acc ‡@	332.48	...	+1.66	0.70
Income A Acc ‡@	241.65	...	+0.84	1.30
Sterling Bond Acc ‡@	242.37	...	-0.28	...
Sterling Bond Inc ‡@	97.00	...	-0.11	...

THREADNEEDLE INVESTMENTS
Client Serv: 0800 0683000
Intermediary Serv: 0800 0684000
Institutional Shares (Class 2) (500000 GBP)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle UK Eq Opps Ins Inc ‡@	120.04	...	+0.93	1.67

Retail Shares (Class 1)

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
Threadneedle HY Bd Rtl Inc ‡@	36.04	...	+0.14	4.28
Threadneedle Mthly Etr Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	78.83	...	+0.43	3.50
Threadneedle SterlingCorpBd Ins Inc ‡@	54.06	...	+0.33	2.21
Threadneedle SterlingCorpBd Rtl Inc ‡@	53.95	...	+0.32	1.82
Threadneedle Stg Bd Ret Inc ‡@	47.06	...	+0.32	1.34
Threadneedle Strat Bd Ret ‡@	40.66	...	+0.19	3.13
Threadneedle UK Eq Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	96.99	...	+0.68	3.64
Threadneedle UK Growth & Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	90.31	...	+0.69	2.85
Threadneedle UK Insti Rtl ‡@	176.14	...	+1.08	1.95
Threadneedle UK Mthly Inc Rtl Inc ‡@	67.62	...	+0.42	4.27
Threadneedle UK Rtl Inc ‡@	127.54	...	+1.03	1.61
Threadneedle UK Smaller Coms Rtl Inc ‡@	342.70	...	+0.59	...

For Resolution see Ignis

TU FUND MANAGERS LIMITED

	Sell	Buy	+/-	Yld %
British	878.30	878.30	+8.20	0.38
European	210.70	219.40	+1.00	...

* Yield expressed as CAR (Compound Annual Return); † Ex dividend; ‡Middle price; . . . No significant data. # Periodic charge deducted from capital; @ Exit charge

British funds

Index-linked

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
108.20	100.00	Tr IL 1⅞% 22	100.00	– .01	1.93	1.88
389.95	359.04	Tr IL 2½% 24 *	378.94	+ .22	1.43	–0.91
111.98	100.58	Tr IL 0⅛% 24	104.45	+ .05	...	–3.13
120.56	96.90	Tr IL 0⅛% 26	104.36	+ .20	...	–1.16
135.63	99.85	Tr IL 1¼% 27	110.79	+ .46	1.23	–0.86
130.64	93.33	Tr IL 0⅛% 28	105.41	+ .57	...	–0.80
132.52	92.36	Tr IL 0⅛% 29	105.44	+ .69	...	–0.71
141.65	90.61	Tr IL 0⅛% 31	108.26	+ .96	...	–0.79
402.06	301.39	Tr IL 4⅛% 30 *	349.89	+2.49	1.85	–0.38
161.90	99.08	Tr IL 1¼% 32	120.01	+1.11	1.04	–0.68
160.29	92.56	Tr IL 0¾% 34	114.89	+1.27	...	–0.52
324.74	206.76	Tr IL 2% 35 *	258.74	+2.82	0.94	–0.29
161.43	82.01	Tr IL 0⅛% 36	107.22	+1.23	...	–0.38
186.89	94.08	Tr IL 1⅛% 37	122.22	+1.40	0.97	–0.32
169.23	78.25	Tr IL 0⅛% 39	105.77	+1.30	...	–0.22
186.19	84.60	Tr IL 0⅝% 40	114.23	+1.40	...	–0.18
180.53	75.20	Tr IL 0⅛% 41	105.48	+1.43	...	–0.16
199.86	82.66	Tr IL 0⅝% 42	116.01	+1.63	0.54	–0.16
188.86	72.26	Tr IL 0⅛% 44	104.64	+1.59	...	–0.09
196.96	70.25	Tr IL 0⅛% 46	104.28	+1.85	...	–0.06
229.64	80.78	Tr IL 0¾% 47	119.64	+2.17	0.64	–0.03
209.00	66.79	Tr IL 0⅛% 48	104.22	+2.09	...	–0.04
232.71	72.64	Tr IL 0½% 50	115.59	+2.29	...	–0.07
231.36	65.69	Tr IL 0¼% 52	110.69	+2.77	...	–0.11
306.14	88.77	Tr IL 1¼% 55	147.58	+4.22	0.93	–0.15
248.27	60.50	Tr IL 0⅛% 56	110.37	+3.82	...	–0.17
256.47	60.14	Tr IL 0⅛% 58	109.90	+4.35	...	–0.15
297.03	64.93	Tr IL 0⅜% 62	122.76	+5.35	...	–0.18
309.47	55.87	Tr IL 0⅛% 65	117.07	+5.75	...	–0.25
335.00	54.65	Tr IL 0⅛% 68	120.06	+6.34	...	–0.29
395.45	55.40	Tr IL 0⅛% 73	134.36	+7.64	...	–0.48

Longs (Over 15 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
145.94	94.91	Tr 4¼% 36	110.66	+1.69	3.84	3.25
112.70	67.54	Tr 1¾% 37	81.78	+1.53	...	3.32
162.05	98.36	Tr 4¾% 38	117.50	+2.02	4.04	3.33
103.53	58.05	Tr 1⅛% 39	72.59	+1.54	...	3.33
155.95	92.08	Tr 4¼% 39	111.29	+2.05	3.82	3.36
159.16	91.30	Tr 4¼% 40	112.08	+2.17	...	3.35
106.42	54.72	Tr 1¼% 41	71.44	+1.75	...	3.29
147.71	76.78	Tr 3¼% 44	98.61	+2.12	...	3.34
169.96	93.79	Tr 4½% 42	117.12	+2.41	3.84	3.32
154.93	79.61	Tr 3½% 45	102.68	+2.24	...	3.33
175.82	89.35	Tr 4¼% 46	115.49	+2.56	3.68	3.31
99.79	43.93	Tr 0⅞% 46	61.15	+1.72	...	3.28
114.76	51.06	Tr 1½% 47	70.13	+1.86	...	3.27
122.26	53.78	Tr 1¾% 49	74.08	+2.01	...	3.22
185.65	89.75	Tr 4¼% 49	117.52	+2.73	3.62	3.27
95.59	35.82	Tr 0⅝% 50	53.35	+1.77	...	3.15
220.50	63.35	Tr 0⅛% 51	105.86	+2.50	...	-0.08
111.21	44.40	Tr 1¼% 51	63.87	+1.95	...	3.18
180.27	82.51	Tr 3¾% 52	110.80	+2.78	...	3.18
120.44	46.78	Tr 1½% 53	67.79	+2.01	...	3.14
124.61	48.25	Tr 1⅝% 54	70.42	+2.16	...	3.09
205.69	90.79	Tr 4¼% 55	123.23	+3.14	3.45	3.12
132.79	49.39	Tr 1¾% 57	73.50	+2.19	...	2.98
213.01	87.32	Tr 4% 60	122.75	+3.28	...	2.98
96.16	26.21	Tr 0½% 61	46.24	+1.81	...	2.76
173.16	60.88	Tr 2½% 65	91.47	+2.77	...	2.85
219.03	79.01	Tr 3½% 68	116.13	+3.40	...	2.86
149.85	42.99	Tr 1⅝% 71	70.95	+2.56	...	2.70

Mediums (5-15 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
100.82	97.34	Tr 0¾% 23	98.53	+ .02	...	3.00
103.36	98.04	Tr 2¼% 23	99.20	+ .01	...	3.30
99.44	94.34	Tr 0⅛% 24	96.50	+ .03	...	3.16
101.61	94.79	Tr 1% 24	97.14	+ .03	...	3.09
106.44	96.82	Tr 2¾% 24	99.23	+ .04	...	3.20
114.71	100.77	Tr 5% 25	104.07	+ .08	4.80	3.14
100.93	90.15	Tr 0⅝% 25	94.11	+ .10	...	3.06
105.86	93.15	Tr 2% 25	97.28	+ .10	...	3.02
98.77	86.33	Tr 0⅛% 26	91.32	+ .12	...	3.01
104.87	89.28	Tr 1½% 26	94.56	+ .14	...	3.08
104.30	85.65	Tr 1¼% 27	91.79	+ .24	...	3.16
121.98	98.23	Tr 4¼% 27	104.67	+ .35	4.06	3.24
97.74	79.15	Tr 0⅛% 28	85.72	+ .36	...	3.13
107.51	84.72	Tr 1⅝% 28	92.15	+ .43	...	3.09
137.51	107.13	Tr 6% 28	115.06	+ .49	5.21	3.23
99.47	77.61	Tr 0½% 29	85.24	+ .49	...	3.14
102.36	78.21	Tr 0⅞% 29	86.55	+ .55	...	3.05
97.81	72.39	Tr 0⅜% 30	81.55	+ .74	...	3.02
136.04	101.89	Tr 4¾% 30	112.72	+ .94	4.21	2.96
95.84	69.25	Tr 0¼% 31	78.91	+ .93	...	3.03
102.46	73.06	Tr 1% 32	83.46	+1.00	...	3.08
135.62	98.13	Tr 4¼% 32	110.34	+1.24	3.85	3.00
101.40	68.57	Tr 0⅞% 33	79.52	+1.12	...	3.15
144.81	98.89	Tr 4½% 34	113.35	+1.53	3.97	3.14
96.74	61.24	Tr 0⅝% 35	73.11	+1.25	...	3.22

Shorts (under 5 years)

12 month High	Low	Stock	Price (£)	+/–	Int Yld %	Grs rd yld
99.93	98.87	Tr 0⅛% 23	99.50	+ .01	...	2.84
99.37	90.04	Tr 0¼% 25	93.61	+ .05	...	3.31
99.30	84.28	Tr 0⅜% 26	89.90	+ .16	...	3.14

* maturities having an eight-month indexation lag.

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Business Equity prices

Dividend yields Please note dividend yields are supplied by Morningstar. The yield is the sum of a company's trailing 12-month dividend payments divided by the last month's ending share price

12 month high and low Please note the 12 month high and low figures for shares supplied by Morningstar are based on intra-day figures, not closing prices.

Automobiles & parts

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
611¾	89½	Aston Martin Lag	131¼	+ 9¼	...	-0.7

Banking & finance

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
257⅝	133	abrdn	204⅞	+ 6⅜	7.1	4.4
3266	1729	**Admiral**	2097	+ 9	7.2	10.6
88½	46½	ADVFN♦	47½	...	3.1	8.3
426¾	246⅛	AJ Bell	359⅜	+ 6⅛	1.9	33.6
28322⅜	21096⅞	Aon Corpn	25185	+ 6⅝	0.5	61.4
41⅞	21½	Appreciate Group♦	41½	...	2.4	18.0
1030	645	Arbuthnot Bkg♦	832½	...	1.9	18.4
20	11	Argo Group♦	11	...	...	5.0
314¾	180⅞	Ashmore Gp‡	231½	+ 1⅛	7.3	7.9
1610⅝	1185⅜	Aus New Z	1377⅝	+ 3¼	5.8	10.7
602⅞	373¾	**Aviva**	455⅞	+ ½	4.6	59.9
290⅞	193⅜	Banco Santander	240⅝	+ 3	2.6	5.7
2545	986	Bank of Georgia	2545	+ 50	...	7.8
217	135⅝	**Barclays**	158¼	+ ¼	1.9	3.8
½	⅛	Blue Star Capital♦	⅛	...	...	2.9
359	277	BP Marsh&Ptnrs♦	297	...	0.8	8.1
42	7⅞	Braveheart Inv♦	9	...	...	0.2
517	266	Brewin Dolphin	515	+ 1	2.8	28.1
550	173⅞	Bridgepoint	201¾	− 7⅜	...	12.6
82	40	Cenkos Secs♦	45½	...	7.6	9.2
325	256½	Chesnara	278	+ 2	7.9	15.4
68	31	City of Lon Gp♦	45½	...	...	-3.1
530	343½	City Lon Inv Gp	410	− 5	8.0	9.6
1452	894	Close Bros	1074	+ 19	5.5	8.0
317	211½	CMC Markets	237½	+ 7½	12.9	7.2
807⅝	494¾	Commerzbk	683½	− 10⅛	...	35.0
1268⅛	665⅞	Deutsche Bk	879¼	+ 4⅞	...	10.3
312¼	177⅝	Direct Line Ins	220	− ⅜	10.1	9.1
59½	57	Downing ONE VCT	57	...	4.3	7.7
1⅛	⅜	Drumz♦	¾	...	...	-7.0
186¾	84⅞	EFG-Hermes Hldg	91⅛	+ 8¼	...	5.8
373	122½	EPE Special Opps♦	139	...	...	7.7
942⅝	664⅝	FBD	907⅛	...	...	4.0
72½	67½	Fiske♦	67½	− 2½	...	12.0
83½	59	Frenkel Topping♦‡	73	...	1.8	42.4
761	458½	Georgia Capital	761	+ 15	...	2.0
1005	710	Gresham House♦	743	− 22	0.8	29.8
488	260	H&T Group♦	488	+ 3	1.7	15.6
52	33	Hansard Global	43	...	10.3	14.8
1498½	740¾	**Hargreaves L**	845	+ 36½	4.5	15.0
195	143½	Helios Under♦	156½	...	1.9	...
567⅛	414	**HSBC**	489⅛	+ 2¼	3.3	10.6
847½	648	IG Group	824	+ 7½	5.2	8.4
1482	500	Impax♦	736	− 3	1.4	24.2
2300	953⅛	**Intermed Cap**	1202	+ 45	4.6	6.9
142⅜	71⅞	IPF	77¾	− 2⅛	2.8	4.3
173¾	136	Intl Public Pntshp	153	− 1	4.8	19.6
536¾	351½	Investec	506⅛	+ 7⅝	2.5	12.7
320	260	Investment Co	260	− 3	0.3	9.3
123¾	52¾	IP Group	68¼	+ ⅝	1.4	2.5
302½	94	Jarvis Securities♦‡	162½	− 2½	8.3	11.6
265	83¾	Jupiter Fund Mgmt	125	+ 4⅜	13.6	4.6
95⅜	55⅞	Just Group	70⅛	+ 1⅛	...	...
595½	346½	Lancashire Hdgs	595½	− 9½	1.9	...
307¾	204	**Legal & Gen**	260⅛	+ 2	6.8	7.9
52452¾	502⅝	Liberty Group	502⅝	− 2⅝	...	...
2325	704	Liontrust	1142	+ 24	4.1	14.2
62	39½	Livermore Invs♦	40⅛	+ ½	8.7	2.5
55⅛	39	**Lloyds Bkg Gp**	45⅜	...	5.6	6.3
36½	29¼	LMS Capital	30½	+ 1	2.9	13.2
8582	6370	**Lond Stk Ex Gp**	8232	+ 68	0.9	84.1
227¼	159⅞	**M&G**	194¼	+ 2¾	9.4	60.7
274⅞	178¾	Man	216	+ 1	3.8	8.6
17½	7½	Manx Fin♦	16½	...	1.0	8.3
3⅜	2	Marechale Cap♦	2⅛	− ¼	...	1.0
15171	12254	Marsh McLn	14118¾	− 38⅞	1.4	29.4
892½	530	Mattioli Woods♦	625	− 13	3.3	...
22¼	12¼	Metal Tiger♦	12½	− ¼	...	4.8
106⅜	69	Metro Bank	95	...	...	-0.6
1897¼	1463⅝	Nat Aust Bk	1743⅝	+ 18⅜	2.7	17.2
283⅜	207⅝	**NWG**	254¼	− ¼	4.1	10.0
343	170⅜	Numis♦	185	+ ¾	6.4	3.7
599	375⅜	Onesavings Bank	472½	+ 6¾	4.1	6.2
691	522	PayPoint	534	+ 1	6.0	16.7
14	¼	PCF Group♦	⅝	...	...	-0.3
701⅜	506¾	**Phoenix Gp**	601¾	+ 8¾	8.0	-6.9
381½	136¼	Provident	200½	+ 8⅜	...	3.7
1468	797½	**Prudential**	944⅜	− 1⅜	1.2	15.3
3¼	1	Quantum Blockchain♦	1	+ ⅛	...	-5.9
179½	82	Quilter	104¼	+ 1⅝	5.0	74.5
182⅛	67	Randall & Quilter♦	67	...	5.7	99.8
2210	1518	Rathbone Grp	2055	+ 20	3.6	15.8
1⅜	½	RiverFort Global Opps♦	⅝	...	2.9	1.9
1690	1370	Rockwood Strategic	1445	+ 10	1.9	2.1
2830	1905	S & U‡	2150	+ 50	4.1	10.1
2¾	1⅝	Sancus Lending Grp♦	1⅝	...	...	-0.7
60¾	40¾	Schroder REIT	46	− ½	5.5	4.8
731⅛	358¾	**Schroders**	456⅛	+ 7⅞	25.4	2.1
1731½	920	**St James Place**	1176½	+ 28	5.2	22.4
638½	411½	**Stand Chart**	587	+ 1⅜	1.5	13.1
16½	7¼	Starvest♦	7½	...	...	-1.2
34½	22½	STM Group♦	29	...	4.8	11.1
4693⅝	3432	Sun Life Can	3837⅜	+ 14¾	3.5	9.8
10	3⅝	Tavistock Inv♦	7⅝	...	0.6	1.2
2190	901	TBC Bank Group	2140	+ 80	1.6	6.2
20	7	Tern♦	9¼	...	...	6.9
27	15¼	Time Finance♦	18¾	+ ¼	...	11.4
1325	900	Volvere♦	1025	...	...	...
51½	25	WH Ireland♦	28	...	...	15.7
33½	27	Walker Crips Grp	29½	...	2.5	84.2
5014	3177⅝	Wells Fargo	3920¼	+ 15¾	1.4	10.7
1391⅞	1083⅝	Westpac	1341⅜	+ 7¾	3.5	18.1
30⅛	21½	Worsley Investors Ltd	23½	...	...	73.4
40988⅛	33706¼	Zurich Fincl	39391¼	+ 35⅛	4.1	15.3

Investment companies

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	Dis(-) or Pm
1477	1042	**3I Group**	1348½	+ 28	3.2	-10.6
368½	248¾	3i Infrastructure	328	− 2	3.2	1.2
104½	83⅛	Abrdn Div I&G	95	...	4.8	-19.1
1488	1066	Aberforth Smlr	1292	− 6	2.7	-10.5
1062½	867¾	Alliance	976	− 5	2.3	-4.0
526	352	Asia Dragon Tr	391	− 1	1.5	-13.1
248	183½	Athelney Trust	215	+ 5	4.8	-7.1
1096⅝	169	AVI Global Trust	196⅜	− ½	1.6	-8.4
407½	206¼	Baillie Gifford Ch Gr	243	− 5	1.9	-8.0
159⅜	73½	Baillie Gifford Eu Gr	89	+ ⅛	0.4	-12.7
1032	657	Baillie Gifford Jpn Tr	791	− 5	0.7	-2.0
251	131¼	Baillie Gifford SN	157	− 1⅜	...	-6.6
246	139⅜	Baillie Gifford UK Gr	166⅜	+ ⅛	2.3	-12.6
150½	90⅞	Bankers	102	− ⅛	2.1	-7.0
5232	3610	BH Macro	4635	+ 40	...	11.9
1217½	722¼	Biotech Growth	940	− 7	...	-7.3
151	93¾	BlckRck Com Inc	134	− ½	3.3	-5.6
140	114	BlckRck Fro Inv	129½	+ 1	3.8	-10.3
714	396	BlckRck Grt Euro	476	+ 2	1.3	-5.4
206	164	BlckRck Inc & Gwth	188	+ 2	3.8	-8.8
457	315	BlckRck Latin Am	367	− 5	4.6	-12.1
214	183¼	BlckRck Sustain American Inc	206	− 2	3.7	-3.7
2140	1162	BlckRck Smlr	1394	...	2.5	-11.7
980	477⅞	BlckRck Throgmorton	618	− 2	1.9	-0.6
804⅞	524	BlckRck Wld Min	675	− 4	7.5	0.7
25⅞	7¼	Blue Plan Int Fn#	9½	...	...	-17.5
340	256	BMO Cap&Inc	300	+ 1	4.1	-1.8
124⅛	68½	BMO Comm Prop	91½	− 1⅝	3.3	-33.1
174½	122	BMO Glbl Smaller	148	+ ½	1.1	-10.7
520	375½	BMO Priv Eq Ord	430	+ 3	3.5	-34.6
101	67⅜	BMO Real Estate	72½	− ½	3.3	-40.2
97	71	BMO UK HIT	81	...	6.5	-8.9
96	79	BMO UK HIT B	83½	+ ½	...	-6.7
388	294	BMO UK HIT UNIT	318	...	2.8	-10.6
1512	1072½	Brown Advsr US Smlr	1300	− 5	...	-8.7
1135	888	Brunner	1040	...	2.0	-10.1
4075	3015	Caledonia Inv	4025	+ 10	4.8	-20.0
191½	141	Invesco BondInc	165	+ 2	7.1	1.2
427	363¼	City of Lon IT	408½	...	5.3	1.8
123½	96¾	Crystal Amber Fd	113	− ½	15.4	-16.8
555	452¾	Dunedin Entp	532½	+ 5	2.6	-3.5
653½	537	Edinburgh IT	630	...	4.1	-7.4
325½	154½	Edin Wwide	179⅛	...	...	-9.1
324¼	268	EP Global Opp	319	...	1.4	-11.4
142	74½	European Assets	93⅛	+ 1⅜	9.6	-4.1
871	608	European Opp Tr	736	− 2	...	-12.1
942	767⅛	**F&C Investment Tr**	923	+ 1	1.4	-2.8
488	406⅛	Fidlty Asian Val	458	+ 1	2.9	-9.4
332	181⅞	Fidelity China Sp	211½	− 1½	2.5	-9.6
384¼	256½	Fidlty Euro Val	323	− ½	2.3	-4.5
257	143	Fidlty Jap Tru	173½	...	...	-7.8
311	232	Fidlty Spec Val	281	+ 1½	2.4	-5.7
925	731¾	Fins Gwth & Inc	862	+ 9	2.1	-4.9
120⅛	85⅝	GCP Infrastructure	100½	+ ⅛	5.8	-10.4
844	552⅝	Gen Emer Mkts	586	− 4	2.0	-14.1
55	28½	Gldn Prosp Prc Mtl	33½	+ ¼	...	-11.9
168½	130⅜	Greencoat UK Wind	154	− ¾	5.8	-0.8
220	166	Hansa Investment	180	...	1.0	-41.0
222¼	170	Hansa Inv Co 'A'	175	...	1.0	-42.6
2860	1986	Hbrvest Glbl Pt Eq	2430	− 5	...	-40.8
165½	120½	Hend Euro Foc	147	− 2½	2.3	-10.2
185½	137¼	Hend High Inc	170½	+ 1½	6.5	1.1
1242	674¼	Hend Smlr	838	+ 2	2.9	-10.2
2555	1540	Herald	1844	− 2	...	-13.7
457½	310	HgCapital Trust	366	+ 5	1.6	-19.6
184⅞	138⅞	HICL Infra	168⅜	+ ⅛	5.0	1.6
286	216	Highbridge Tactical	233	...	...	-13.1
1300	928	ICG Ent Tr	1150	+ 4	1.1	-38.1
581	370⅞	Impax Env Mkts	444½	+ 5½	0.7	0.9
366	280	Invesco Asia Tr	311	+ 2	4.7	-13.0
191½	141	Invesco BondInc	165	+ 2	7.1	1.2
176	111	IPST Bal	122½	+ 5	...	-23.9
250	200	IPST Gbl Eq	224	...	3.0	-10.3
102⅝	93	IPST Managed	96	...	0.9	-9.9
199⅞	141	IPST UK Eq	165	+ 1½	3.9	-10.7
620	373½	IP UKSmallerCos	430	+ 2	1.8	-14.7
800	650	JPM American	732	− 2	0.9	-2.1
463½	294½	JPM Asia	344½	+ ½	4.9	-9.3
564	246½	JPM Chinese	309½	− 5½	7.3	-5.4
778	610¼	JPM Claverhs	706	+ 2	4.9	0.9
105	99	JPM Elect Mg C	103	...	0.2	-0.4
1115¼	886¼	JPM Elect Mg G	965	+ 5	1.8	-4.0
111	88	JPM Elect Mg I	98½	...	5.0	-2.3
133⅜	91	JPM Em Mkts	104¾	− ⅛	1.2	-8.8
562⅛	339	JPM Euro disc	408½	− ½	1.5	-10.6
150⅛	108	JPM GEMI	120	− ½	4.2	-10.6
474	386	JPM GG&I	443½	− 2	3.9	-0.9
898	691¼	JPM Indian	836	− 14	...	-17.6
523½	301	JPM Jap Sml Co	346	+ 9	4.5	-6.9
704¼	408½	JPM Japan#	490	+ 2½	1.1	-4.4
1375	735	JPM Mid Cap	936	+ 3	3.2	-9.1
108¼	85¼	JPM Multi-Ass Grw & Inc	94	...	4.5	-2.5
794	55⅛	JPM Russian	83¼	...	53.7	77.8
408	230	JPM Smllr Co	283	+ 1	...	-11.1
338¼	174	Keystone IT	215½	+ 1½	1.6	-12.8
829	649	Law Debenture	775	− 1	4.2	1.9
143¼	99	Lowland	116½	...	5.2	-9.5
246	156¾	Majedie	195	+ 2	5.0	-20.1
432⅞	272⅛	M Currie Port	308	...	1.4	-2.4
121⅞	90	Marwyn Val In	95	...	5.5	-42.6
272⅝	158¼	Mercantile IT	208	...	3.4	-9.4
591	480	Merchants	561	+ 3	5.3	0.6
870	639¾	Mid Wynd	718	+ 2	1.5	0.6
1431¼	875	Monks Inv Tst	988½	...	0.2	-8.2
225⅛	104⅛	Montanaro Eur Sml	133⅛	+ 1⅛	0.7	-8.5
928	715	Murray Income Trust	840	+ 5	4.4	-6.5
1348	1086⅜	Murray Int	1338	− 4	4.5	1.4
90½	72⅝	Nb Global Floating	75⅜	...	6.6	-6.1
370¼	286¼	Pacific Assets	352	− 1	0.5	-7.8
342½	229⅛	Pantheon Int	275	+ 1	...	-44.3
3125	2295	**Pershing Sq**	2915	− 5	0.9	-33.1
507	465½	Personal Assets	479½	...	1.4	1.0
2751¼	1764	Polar Cap Tech	1944	+ 4	...	-7.7
202	143⅛	Prem Glb & Inf	162½	+ 1¾	3.9	-13.9
148½	112½	Renewables Inf	130¾	− ⅛	5.1	-1.9
2765	1928	RIT Cap Ptnr	2240	− 20	...	-6.6
750	454¾	Riverstone	704	+ 14	...	-38.6
524	366½	Schroder TotRt	404	− 7	2.2	-5.1
610	446	Schrd Asia Pac	499	...	1.9	-10.6
319½	254½	Schrod Inc Gwth	292	+ 1	4.8	-1.9
221	185⅞	Schrod Jap Gwth	212	+ 3	1.9	-9.9
718	454	Schrod UKMid	550	...	2.8	-13.5
34½	14¾	Schroder UK PP Tr	15⅝	...	...	-48.9
546	434	Scot American	518	+ 1	2.7	1.7
1521½	670½	**Scot Mtge**	761¾	− 9⅛	0.4	-7.6
242	207	Secs Tst Scot	231	+ 1	2.6	0.1
108	75½	Sequoia Eco	90½	− ¾	6.9	0.4
255¾	195⅛	Temple Bar	231½	...	3.5	-4.7
184⅛	130	Tplton Emg Mkt	141¾	− ½	2.5	-13.6
⅜	⅛	Tiger Royal and Invest♦	⅛	...	...	87.5
500	263	TR Property	324	− 2½	4.6	-4.2
83	64⅜	Troy Inc&Gth	70⅜	− ½	2.1	-1.4
260	154¾	Utilico Ord	168½	− ½	3.4	-27.0
227½	196½	Utilico Emerging Mkt	201	...	3.3	-15.1
147	139⅝	UtilFin RdZDP 2022	139	− 6	...	-5.5
779	500	Vietnam Ent Inv	526	− 10	...	-8.2
252	199¾	Witan	226	− 1	2.5	-5.2
3662½	2820	Ww Health	3295	− 30	0.7	-6.0



Construction & property

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
237½	133	Alumasc♦	151½	...	6.2	7.6
19	10½	Aseana Props	11⅛	...	...	-5.5
71¾	48⅝	Assura Grp	56⅛	− 1¼	5.1	11.2
2⅜	1⅜	Aukett Swanke♦	2¼	...	...	-3.2
340⅜	215½	Balfour Beatty‡	323⅜	+ 3⅛	1.3	15.3
760	323⅜	**Barratt Devs**	403⅝	+ 5	7.2	6.3
3363	1586½	Bellway	2013	+ 28	5.8	6.0
4903	3165	**Berkeley**	3791	+ 56	0.2	9.8
1724	987	Big Yellow Group	1117	− 23	3.0	7.3
282	181½	Billington Hldgs♦	220	...	1.9	17.8
345	230	Boot (Henry)	237	+ 10	2.3	12.6
556⅜	324¾	**Br Land**	415	+ 5⅜	3.6	56.8
160	110	Caledonian Tst♦	135	...	...	26.9
179¼	95½	Cap & Count Prop	106⅞	− ⅜	0.4	31.4
65	43¾	Cap & Regnl	55	...	...	-0.4
2550	1950	Cardiff Prop	2450	...	0.7	26.6
38½	17½	Carecapital♦	17½	− ½	...	-2.0
173	106	Clarke T	125½	− ½	3.5	9.0
231	131⅜	CLS Hldgs	161¾	+ 1⅜	4.6	5.5
464¾	191⅝	Countryside Prop	229¾	+ 14	...	16.7
39	6¼	Craven House♦	7⅜	+ 1⅛	...	-0.1
4002	2756½	**CRH**	3308	+ 8	2.5	13.7
3528	1876	Derwent London	2416	+ 12	3.1	10.7
4¼	3	Dolphin Capital♦	3¾	...	...	-2.6
36½	23	First Prop♦	24½	...	1.8	...
52½	36½	Fletcher King♦	43½	...	...	...
46⅝	27¼	Foxtons Group	32⅝	...	0.5	...
190⅞	145	Galliford Try‡	148¾	− ⅛	3.1	33.0
620	252½	Genuit Group	320	+ 10½	2.7	19.3
800	355	Gleeson (MJ)‡	355	+ 10	4.2	5.5
1267	630½	Grafton Gp Uts	803⅜	+ 10½	4.4	9.3
319⅛	205⅜	Grainger	242¾	− 2⅛	2.2	15.0
741	409⅛	Gr Portland	531	− 6½	2.3	-6.6
39⅞	17⅛	Hammerson	24¼	− ⅜	1.6	-2.6
191	101	Harworth Gp	107	+ ½	1.7	3.7
630	450	Heath (Samuel)♦	450	...	1.5	9.3
454	296½	Helical PLC	345	− 5	2.9	8.3
1065	875	Highcroft Invs	995	...	5.2	4.3
208⅛	148½	Ibstock	163⅞	+ 1⅜	2.5	21.2
314	181	James Halstead♦‡	211	+ 1	3.6	22.4
1000	591	Keller	764	+ 28	4.7	8.8
9383¼	3935⅝	Kingspan Group	4968⅛	+ 27½	0.6	19.5
813⅛	485¼	**Land Sec**	634¾	+ 6½	5.3	...
105	71½	Life Science Reit♦	75⅛	...	...	...
25	12	Lon & Assoc	19	...	...	-2.5
285⅛	161¾	London Metric Prop	185½	− 4⅜	4.7	3.9
59	37	Macau Prop Op	46⅜	+ ⅝	...	-6.0
740⅛	225⅜	Marshalls‡	290⅛	+ ¾	3.1	10.5
138	74	Michelmersh♦	78½	...	4.6	12.5
2540	1392	Morgan Sindall	1624	+ 40	4.3	7.9
14750	11100	Mountview	11500	...	3.7	14.3
100	68¼	NewRiver REIT	71⅝	− ¼	4.1	-2.5
297	195	Palace Capital	220	...	5.0	10.5
310	255	Panther Securities♦	300	...	4.0	2.7
2883	1138½	**Persimmon**	1314½	+ 18	17.8	5.3
8	2¾	Pires Investments♦	2¾	...	...	-6.2
175	55	Plaza Cent	55	− 10	...	-0.1
153	98⅝	Primary Hlth‡	116½	− ⅝	5.3	11.9
40½	29½	Real Estate Invs♦	32	...	11.7	4.1
709	372½	Redrow	465½	+ 10⅜	5.2	5.7
1418	794	Safestore	924	− 13½	2.1	5.2
1450	763½	Savills	928½	− 4	2.4	9.3
7¼	5¾	Secure Property♦	5¾	...	...	15.2
1436½	694	**Segro**	816	− 3½	2.7	2.4
51⅝	27¾	SIG	30½	...	...	...
98½	37⅜	SigmaRoc♦	49½	− ⅛	...	...
144	66½	Sirius Real Estate	83½	...	3.9	6.5
161½	129½	Smart (J)	160½	...	2.0	4.3
50	26	Steppe Cement♦‡	40¼	+ ¼	9.4	9.2
178	85	**Taylor Wimpey**	104	+ 1	7.9	6.8
178½	128½	Town Centre	164	− 3	2.1	6.4
1635	738	Travis Perkins	978⅜	+ 19	1.2	9.5
249	125⅝	Tritax Big Box Reit	148¼	− 2¼	4.3	2.6
118	58⅝	Tritax Eurobox	64½	− 1¼	...	...
414	184½	Tyman	223	− 2	3.5	8.8
1207	791½	**UNITE GRP**	942	+ 1½	2.0	10.9
1225	519½	Vistry Group	644	+ 16½	6.2	5.6
176¾	105⅜	Warehouse REIT	110¾	− 4	5.6	2.6
887	343⅜	Workspace Grp	457½	+ ½	3.8	-6.8
755	645	Wynnstay Props♦‡	670	...	3.1	4.8

Consumer goods

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
6¾	4	Agriterra♦	5	...	...	-0.6
30½	25	Airea♦	25½	...	...	9.4
952	670	Anglo-Eastern	812	+ 4	...	7.4
363	207½	Animalcare♦	225	− 10	1.7	...
2131	1237	**AB Foods**	1560	+ 40	0.4	25.7
133½	79	Bakkavor Group	88⅞	− 5½	7.4	9.2
588	432	Barr (AG)	506	+ 10½	...	17.9
5⅝	1¾	Bidstack Group♦	3⅝	+ ¼	...	-3.0
128½	26½	Brand Architekts♦	26½	...	...	-1.1
3628	2530	**Brit Amer Tob**	3353½	+ 8	6.4	11.3
949½	707½	Britvic	784½	+ 15½	3.0	17.7
2101	1482	**Burberry Grp**	2101	+ 10	2.0	18.0
246¾	143⅞	C&C Grp	175½	...	...	...
12	4⅜	Capital Metals♦	4¾	...	...	-1.2
160	92	Carr's Grp	110	+ 4¼	4.5	13.5
640	363	Character Grp♦	365	...	2.4	6.5
1797½	1070	Churchill China♦	1200	− 65	...	...
2687	1460½	**Coca Cola HBC**	2035	+ 23	2.6	16.2
880	595	Colefax♦	655	...	...	11.5
3820	2586	Cranswick	3158	− 50	2.2	16.6
228½	164	Devro	193⅛	+ 2¾	4.7	10.5
4103½	3343	**Diageo**	3757	+ 11½	1.9	28.9
1⅞	⅝	Distil♦	¾	...	...	18.7
1085	784	Evans (M.P.)♦	864	+ 32	3.2	7.4
102	66½	Finsbury Food♦	89	− 2	2.7	10.6
10090	1722	Games Workshop‡	7560	+ 75	3.3	20.8
1153⅛	851¼	Glanbia	994⅜	− 2½	2.3	24.5
141	64	Greencore	70⅜	...	...	14.0
459	231	Headlam‡	291	− 1	2.6	12.5
1250	529	Hilton Food‡	535	− 8	4.1	11.1
57	25½	Hornby♦	28½	...	...	...
2185	1486	**Imperial Brands**	2185	+ 30	6.3	7.3
1⅞	1⅛	J Lewis Hford♦	1¼	...	...	7.9
10505¾	7606½	Kerry Gp	8111¾	+ 163¼	0.9	22.4
69⅜	15½	McBride	22½	− ⅛	...	-4.0
370	200	Mulberry Group♦‡	260	...	...	10.7
1540	1055	Nichols♦	1100	+ 20	1.6	...
327	165	Norcros	190	− 5	4.3	6.0
383⅝	289⅜	Origin Ents♦	322⅜	+ 8½	2.8	10.1
68	50	Pittards♦	62½	...	0.8	29.4
710	302½	Portmeirion♦	302½	...	4.3	12.8
1	⅝	Provexis♦	⅝	...	...	0.3
214½	182¾	PZ Cussons‡	212½	+ 2½	2.8	24.5
200½	96½	REA	113	+ 3½	...	-8.9
3¼	1	Real Gd Fd♦	1¾	...	...	0.1
660	235	Tandem♦	290	− 5	3.0	4.1
1315	507	Treatt	665	− 5	0.9	26.7
4½	1¾	Ukrproduct Gp♦	3¼	...	...	-2.2
69¾	9¼	Unbound Group♦	9¼	− ¼	...	...
4798	4010	Unilever (NV)	4784	+ 28	3.0	24.5
4110½	3328	**Unilever‡**	4110½	− 6	3.5	21.1
1210	317	Victoria♦	450	− 24	...	...

Engineering

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
...	...	Ass Br Eng#	15	...	...	-3.5
1381	739	Avon Rubber	1178	+ 20	2.4	...
367½	268½	Babcock	298⅛	− 11	...	-1.8
846⅛	528¾	**BAE Sys‡**	798	− ⅛	3.0	14.5
2400	1600	Braime A N/V♦	2050	...	0.5	23.1
2490	1480	Braime Group♦	1750	+ 50	0.6	19.7
602½	500	Caffyns	525	...	...	7.6
6½	3	Cap XX Ld♦	3¾	...	...	-8.1
374	279	Castings	354	− 3	4.3	17.1
8⅛	4¼	Chamberlin♦	4⅜	− ⅛	...	-0.3
54	15½	Checkit♦	16¼	− ¼	...	-1.9
630	391	Cohort♦	435	+ 15	2.5	38.6
324	158½	Crestchic Plc♦	324	+ 34	...	...
1760	1020⅜	Dewhurst♦	1150	...	1.1	13.2
371	232⅞	Dialight	295	− 10	...	...
1766¾	913⅜	Electrolux 'B'	1106⅛	+ 7⅛	5.9	8.3
220	87½	Feedback♦	87½	− 3	...	...
1275	455	Gooch Hsego♦	455	...	0.9	33.7
3625	2400	Goodwin	3365	+ 75	3.0	18.6
3216	1876½	**Halma**	2255	+ 15	0.7	32.6
1866	893	Hill & Smith	1190	+ 14	2.4	28.0
125	77½	Holders Tech♦	77½	− 2½	0.9	4.7
3¼	¾	Image Scan♦	1	...	...	6.0
1838	1071	IMI	1453	+ 3	1.5	19.8
...	...	Inspirit Energy♦	...	...	...	...
8740	6090	Judges Scientific♦	7680	+ 30	0.7	38.7
81	60	LPA♦	74½	...	...	...
798¾	732¾	Meggitt	798¾	+ ⅛	...	...
173½	95½	**Melrose**	132⅜	+ 1¾	1.2	...
379½	217	Morgan Advanced	309½	− 1½	2.1	13.0
560	227½	Mpac♦	237½	− 3	...	6.2
335	213	MS Intl♦	323	...	1.0	46.1
2665	1720	Oxford Inst	2210	+ 25	0.7	30.1
3264¾	1064	Philips El nv	1178¾	+ 4¼	6.0	20.9
36½	12¼	PipeHawk♦	15	...	...	31.9
101½	23⅛	Pressure Tech♦	31½	...	...	-2.6
5230	3342	Renishaw‡	4054	+ 42	1.6	23.1
32¼	20	Renold♦	23¼	...	...	8.3
141⅜	66⅛	**Rolls-Royce**	88⅜	+ 3	...	60.1
3	1⅛	Ross Gp	1¼	...	...	-3.1
373⅜	229½	Rotork	298⅛	+ 12½	2.9	32.4
214	137½	SDI Group♦	162	+ ½	...	26.7
152	111	Senior	125¾	+ 3⅛	...	21.9
74⅜	48	Severfield	60	+ ½	4.8	10.7
16¼	11¼	Six Hundred♦	12¾	− ¼	...	74.5
1843⅛	1154⅜	SKF B	1395½	+ 19	4.0	10.3
270	175	Slingsby (HC)♦	270	...	...	4.4
1629	1364	**Smiths**	1618½	+ ½	2.3	25.7
1400⅛	946¾	Solid State♦	1250	− 40	1.2	30.1
598	360	Somero Enter♦	376	− 2	4.2	8.3
3795	2458	Spectris	3290	+ 21	2.1	10.8
16565	9130	**Spirax-Sarco**	11480	+ 135	1.0	36.1
60	37	Surface Trsfms♦	38¾	− 2¼	...	...
3½	1½	Tanfield♦	3¼	...	...	-9.0
495	345	Thorpe FW♦‡	420	− 8	1.3	29.2
4¾	⅝	TP Group♦	2⅛	...	...	-3.2
110½	48½	Transense Tech♦	93½	+ 2½	...	68.7
3500	2824	Ultra Electrncs	3500	+ 6	1.6	37.4
491	284½	Vesuvius	387¾	+ 5½	5.2	10.3
1530	1060	Videndum	1300	...	1.1	23.8
392	225	Volex♦‡	299	+ 6	1.1	16.3
1897	1328½	Weir	1820	+ 21½	0.6	30.7
5300	1464	XP Power	2045	− 150	4.5	10.9
185	111¼	Zytronic♦	135	− 2½	...	45.0

Health

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1750	1049	Abcam♦	1338	+ 29	...	...
338	234½	AdvancedMedical♦	279	+ 4	0.6	43.8
36	14¼	Allergy Therap♦	14¼	− ⅝	...	...
156	46½	Angle♦	55	+ 2	...	-7.5
710	370	Anpario♦‡	437½	...	1.8	23.0
11440	8191	**AstraZeneca**	10996	− 88	1.8	...
46	29	Circassia Group♦	34	...	...	34.0
245¾	166¾	**Convatec**	231½	+ ⅜	1.7	54.0
105	34½	Creighton	34½	− ⅝	3.3	6.6
5365	2520	**Dechra Pharma**	2718	− 18	1.4	40.5
1½	⅞	Deltex Medical♦	⅞	...	...	-5.2
48⅜	15⅜	e-Therapeutics♦	19¾	− ⅛	...	...
230	82½	Eco Animal Hlth♦	82½	− 3½	1.2	10.0
83	30	EKF Diagnostics♦‡	42	− ½	2.3	11.9
46¾	24⅝	Futura Medical♦	43	+ 2⅝	...	...
5485	2234	Genus‡	3046	− 58	1.0	54.2
1828½	1296	**GSK‡**	1384	− 25½	5.7	15.9
1	⅜	Gunsynd♦	⅜	...	...	4.3
316½	246⅛	**Haleon**	286½	− 1⅜	...	...
2312	1190½	Hikma Pharms	1511	+ 39	2.5	11.3
539	134½	Hutchmed China♦	174⅛	+ 1⅛	...	-9.4
...	...	Immunodiag Sys♦	378	...	0.5	...
8	2¼	ImmuPharma♦	2¼	...	...	-0.7
7025	1060	Indivior	1715	− 2	...	98.1
126½	73	Inspiration Health♦	84½	...	0.7	13.0
62	29	IXICO♦	29	...	...	9.2

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
501½	286⅜	Mediclinic Int	497	+½	...	31.0
8½	1½	N4 Pharma♦	2	...	...	-2.3
88.42	72.84	Novartis	CHF82.05	-1.47	3.3	9.1
45¼	2¼	Omega Diags♦	3⅞	+½	...	-1.5
22½	5½	Ovoca Bio♦	6¼	...	...	-1.7
1430	297	Oxford Biomedica	368½	+11½	...	16.5
6⅞	2	Physiomics♦	2⅜	...	...	-9.4
5⅝	3¼	Proteome Scies♦	3¾	...	...	...
6808	5450	**Reckitt Benck**	5878	-20	2.9	...
149	31⅜	RUA Life Sciences♦	35½	+2	...	-3.4
307½	82½	Sareum Hldgs♦	82½	-5	...	...
1338½	984½	**Smith & Neph**	1076	+1	2.5	24.4
254½	206	Spire Hcare	228	+1	...	...
212½	16⅛	Synairgen♦	18⅛	+¼	...	-0.8
½	¼	Tissue Regenix♦	½	...	...	-7.3
47½	27¾	Totally♦	34	...	1.4	53.9
495	292	Tristel♦‡	320	...	2.0	65.9
42	10½	ValiRx♦	17⅝	...	...	...

Industrials

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
181	54⅜	Accsys Tech♦	65¾	+⅝	...	...
6023⅝	3406⅞	BASF	4236⅜	-21½	6.5	8.3
5939½	3880⅞	Bayer DM50	4685¼	-10¼	3.5	54.7
335	46½	Biome Tech♦	78½	...	...	-2.6
5⅛	1⅞	Byotrol♦	2	...	...	...
7¼	6¼	Camb Gbl Timber♦	6¾	...	...	-9.0
81⅜	50⅞	Coats Grp	68	-½	2.0	15.1
10410	5908	**Croda**	6888	+60	1.3	30.0
1575	825	Cropper (James)♦	930	...	...	28.3
146½	87⅝	Elementis	107¾	+2½	...	...
36	13¾	Hardide♦	13¾	...	...	-2.6
2360	1721	Johnson Math	2105	+72	3.3	26.5
1950½	1309	**Mondi**	1566½	+4	3.2	11.9
97½	75	Robinson♦	85	...	6.4	...
401¾	241¾	**Smith (DS)**	308	+2⅝	3.9	17.5
660½	440⅞	Swire Pacific	634⅞	-5¾	2.5	...
28	11¼	Symph Environ♦	12¼	+1	...	...
513	88	Synthomer	145½	+1½	11.8	3.0
2443⅜	1819½	Takeda Pharm	2389	+32⅛	4.8	13.3
11⅜	4⅛	Velocys♦	4½	-¼	...	-5.6
2486	1576	Victrex	1796	+17	3.3	21.3
651	500	Wynnstay Group♦	600	...	2.5	13.7
448	233	Zotefoams	325	-4	1.9	19.5

Leisure

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
351¾	86⅛	888 Hldgs	98⅜	+2¼	11.1	7.2
920	542	Accesso Tech♦	778	+108	...	20.4
730	370	Best of the Best♦	415	+5	1.2	4.6
1588⅛	501⅜	Carnival	717	+9	...	-1.1
140	95	Celtic♦	109	...	...	10.7
62¼	1⅞	Cineworld	4⅞	+⅛	...	-0.1
465⅛	215⅛	Domino's Pizza	287⅜	+1⅜	4.2	14.6
1949½	1075½	**Entain**	1385	+20	...	30.9
11835	7614	**Flutter Ent**	11750	+240	...	...
36⅜	22	Gaming Realms♦	23⅝	-½	...	...
290	290	Heavitree♦	290	...	...	17.4
200	140	Heavitree A♦	140	-45	...	8.4
145	105	Hermes Pacific♦	145	...	...	...
5338	4193	**Intercont Htls**	4765	+1	...	44.6
1¼	⅞	Minoan Gp♦	1	...	...	-7.2
266¾	102	Mitch & Butlers	140⅜	+4½	...	...
312	92½	On The Beach	102¾	+2⅜	...	-5.4
1600	1180	PPHE Hotels	1265	+5	...	...
168	52⅜	Rank Grp	89	+⅛	...	12.0
106⅜	28	Restaurant Gp	31¾	+½	...	-6.0
35½	21½	Rotala♦	34½	...	...	...
40	15½	Sportech♦	17½	...	...	...
303⅛	184¾	SSP Group	211⅛	+1⅝	...	-4.1
6¼	3½	Tasty♦	3½	...	...	4.7
305	47½	Tintra♦	240	+5	...	-4.2
294⅛	105⅜	TUI	141	+2⅛	...	-1.4
4¾	1¼	Webis Holdings♦	1¼	...	...	...
973	389¾	Wetherspoon JD	449½	+3	...	-4.1
3243	2285	**Whitbread**‡	2612	+73	...	...
1660	870	Young & Co - A♦‡	1170	-26	...	...
890	564	Young & Co - N/V♦‡	645	-5	...	...

Media

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
½	⅛	7digital Gp♦	¼	...	...	-2.5
87½	44½	Aeorema Comms♦	80	...	...	22.1
34½	20½	Altitude Group♦	29	+2	...	...
130	72	Arcontech Grp♦	80	-1½	3.4	11.0
448¾	176⅛	Ascential	209¾	-¾	...	...
741¾	486⅛	**Auto Trader**	580¾	+10⅛	0.8	28.6
486	328	Bloomsbury Pub‡	486	-6	1.8	20.0
11⅛	3¼	Bonhill Group♦	5¾	...	...	...
120	47½	Catalyst Media♦	120	...	...	...
¾	⅛	Catenae♦	⅛	...	...	-0.3
1108	269	Daily Mail‡	270	-2½	8.9	10.3
195	100	DCD Media♦#	100	-30	...	5.0
71½	43	Ebiquity♦	43½	...	...	...
1466	829	Euromoney In Inv	1460	+2	0.7	...
3830	1145	Future	1520	+10	0.1	26.1
1425	930	GlobalData♦	1255	...	1.4	62.1
115	46¾	Hyve Group	61⅜	-1	...	...
288½	46½	IG Design Grp♦	113½	-½	7.6	16.6
624	464⅜	**Informa**	612¾	+6⅜	...	...
124⅝	55⅛	ITV‡	75⅝	+1½	...	8.1
12¼	7¼	Jaywing♦	8¾	...	...	...
12¼	2½	Live Company Gp♦	3¼	+¼	...	-0.6
...	...	Mediazest♦	...	...	...	-6.5
51	34	Merit Grp♦	42½	...	...	...
74	30	Mirada♦	30	...	...	-1.3
70	42	Mission Group♦‡	49	-1½	4.7	8.3
225½	167	Moneysupermarket	200	+¼	5.8	20.4
2010¼	1269⅛	News Corp A	1497⅝	+19⅞	0.9	24.4
2034⅛	1296⅜	News Corp B	1520	+17⅜	0.9	24.8
1458	755	Next 15 Comms♦‡	1058	-22	0.6	...
981⅜	571¾	**Pearson**	981⅜	-5¾	2.0	46.9
107	56¼	Photo-Me	107	+5	...	18.6
4⅛	2⅛	Primorus Inv♦	2⅛	...	...	4.0
175½	106½	Quarto	131½	...	...	7.3
310	67	Reach	113⅜	+2⅞	6.1	...
2⅛	¾	REACT Grp♦	1⅛	...	...	16.4
2449	2071	**Relx**	2318	+6	2.0	30.5
800⅜	445⅜	**Rightmove**	558½	+13¾	0.8	31.6
155	87½	SpaceandPeople♦	93	...	...	...
360	247	STV Group	257	...	3.7	6.2
467	162½	System1 Group♦	162½	-2½	...	7.7
3735⅜	2391½	21st Cent Fox Inc A	2556	-4⅞	1.3	14.0
3400⅛	2255⅝	21st Cent Fox Inc B	2407⅝	-5¾	1.4	13.2
...	...	Vela Tech♦	...	...	...	7.0
318	205	Wilmington‡	290	...	2.0	18.4
1224	725¾	**WPP**	868⅜	-2¾	3.0	16.5
123½	71	Zinc Media♦	87½	...	...	-5.5

Natural resources

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
1½	⅜	ADM Energy♦	⅝	...	...	...
5¼	...	Advance Energy♦#	⅛	...	...	-0.1
57	17¾	AFC Energy♦	19¾	+¾	...	...
...	...	Afentra PLC	...	...	...	...
¼	...	Alba Mineral Res♦	...	...	...	-2.4
1	⅜	Alien Metals♦	⅜	...	...	...
120¼	68½	Alumina	85⅛	...	5.4	17.7
1¼	½	Aminex	1	...	...	-6.1
3⅞	⅝	Amur Mins Corp♦	1⅜	...	...	...
12306561⁄8	7992¾	Anglo Amer Plat	7992¾	+272½	6.1	5.7
4170½	2547½	**Ang Am**	3191	+52½	5.5	6.3
120½	64	Anglo Asian Mng♦	83	-3	6.9	7.2
1781½	991½	**Antofagasta**	1349	+12	3.9	13.9
5¼	2¼	Arc Minerals♦	3⅛	...	...	2.3
4¾	2½	Ariana Res♦	3¼	...	...	4.5
⅞	⅜	Arkle Resources♦	⅜	...	...	-1.5
5⅜	1⅜	Armadale Cap♦	2	+⅛	...	...
2⅞	⅞	Asiamet Rsrcs♦	1⅛	...	...	...
448	188	Atalaya Mine♦	286½	+7½	10.2	3.6
¼	...	Baron Oil♦	⅛	...	...	...
17½	3⅞	Beowulf Mining♦	4¾	...	...	...
⅛	...	Bezant Res♦	...	...	...	-1.8
3019	1868⅜	BHP Group	2443	+1½	...	10.6
6⅞	½	Border & Sthn Pet♦	3	...	...	...
50¼	14⅝	Bougainville	15¼	...	...	...
4¾	1⅞	BowLeven♦	1⅞	...	...	-2.4
501¾	317⅝	**BP**‡	483	-4⅞	3.2	17.5
30⅜	8¾	Cadence Min♦	9⅞	+⅛	...	1.0
3½	1⅝	Cadogan Petrol	2⅛	...	...	30.5
1250	825	Caledonia Mining♦	1010	...	3.3	9.8
253¾	179¾	Capricorn Energy	249½	-1⅜	...	1.9
5¼	2¼	Caspian Sunrise♦‡	3¾	-⅛	...	...
109¾	74⅜	Centamin	104⅛	-¼	4.9	16.1
284	200½	Cent Asia Metals♦	248	+3	6.5	7.2
20½	9⅜	Chaarat Gold♦#	10⅞	...	...	...
23⅞	6⅝	Chariot Oil & Gas♦	18	+2	...	...
10⅛	3⅛	China Nonferr Gold♦	3⅛	...	...	...
⅝	...	Clontarf Energy♦	...	...	...	-1.4
37	21¼	Condor Gld♦	22¼	-2½	...	...
2	¼	Corcel♦	¼	...	...	-0.3
7890¾	53¼	DRD Gold	53¼	-½	7.1	6.2
1⅝	½	ECR Minerals♦	1	...	...	-6.5
25½	10¼	Edenville Energy♦	10½	...	...	-0.7
11¾	¾	Empyrean Energy♦	⅞	-⅛	...	-6.8
2090	1461	**Endeavour Mining**	1698	-3	2.8	25.2
36½	17	EnQuest	24⅜	+⅛	...	1.5
28½	4¼	Eurasia Mining♦	4½	...	...	...
3½	1	Europa Oil&Gas♦	1⅛	...	...	10.2
323	97½	Ferrexpo	147	+3⅜	9.7	1.1
952¾	622⅜	**Fresnillo**	891⅜	+5⅜	2.7	21.1
...	...	G3 Exploration#	28	...	...	-2.6
41½	21	Galantas Gold♦	33	-½	...	-5.6
8⅛	3¼	GCM Resources♦	5½	-⅜	...	-4.6
72⅞	28½	Gem Diamonds	31¼	...	5.9	3.2
36½	15⅛	Getech♦	15½	...	...	-3.6
541½	351⅞	**Glencore**	530¼	+15⅜	1.6	19.4
⅞	¼	Global Petrol♦	¼	...	...	-4.5
1239961⁄2	907⅛	Gold Fields	907⅞	-1⅝	2.8	13.9
12½	6⅝	Goldplat♦	12¼	...	...	9.3
13⅛	5⅛	Goldstone Res♦	5⅛	...	...	...
16⅞	7¼	Greatld Gld♦	7⅜	...	...	...
120½	71⅛	Griffin Mining♦	71⅛	+1⅛	...	7.8
310	168⅛	Gulf Keystone	208½	+½	4.0	13.0
530	298½	**Harbour Energy**	312¼	-8¼	...	36.4
29	5⅝	Harland & Wolff Gp♦	23½	+2¼	...	1.9
167	51½	Hochschild	67⅛	+¼	4.6	6.5
207	85	Horizonte Minrls♦	100½	+1	...	...
18¼	5	Hummingbird Res♦	5⅞	-¼	...	-6.6
356½	144⅜	Hunting PLC	279	-2	2.1	-7.1
106½	12¾	IGas Energy♦	22	+½	...	-1.1
½	⅛	Independ Res♦	⅛	...	...	-0.2
317	214	Indus Gas♦	260	...	...	26.9
1¼	¼	Ironveld♦	¼	...	...	-3.9
469⅛	79⅞	ITM Power♦	97⅛	+7⅞	...	...
17½	11⅜	Jubilee Metals♦	11¾	+1⅛	...	9.8
3¾	1¾	Karel Diamd Res♦	2¼	...	...	-9.5
1¼	½	KEFI Gold and Copper♦	¾	...	...	-3.5
526	380½	Kenmare Res	443	-2	2.5	5.1
40¼	5¾	Lamprell#	8⅞	...	...	-0.7
30¾	11⅞	Landore Res♦	14¼	-¼	...	-3.2
⅝	⅜	Lansdowne O&G♦	½	...	...	...
24	14	Leeds Group♦	14	...	...	-2.2
6⅜	1⅞	Lexington Gold♦	5⅜	...	...	...
20½	2¼	MC Mining♦	14½	+1	...	-3.0
1⅝	¾	Metals Explorn♦	1⅛	...	...	2.0
⅝	⅛	Nostra Terra♦	¼	...	...	-1.5
9⅛	2	Nostrum O&G	2¼	...	...	...
238¾	215⅛	Oil Search	218⅞	-5⅜	0.1	60.3
¼	⅛	Oilex♦#	⅛	...	...	-3.7
⅜	...	Oriole Resources♦	...	...	...	-1.1
1	½	Ormonde Mining♦	⅝	...	...	-3.0
17⅛	7¼	Orosur Mining♦	9½	...	...	...
24	16	Pan African Res♦	17½	-¼	4.7	5.7
149½	67¼	Pantheon Res♦	71¼	-1	...	...
79	34⅜	Parkmead Grp♦	58	-9⅜	...	-5.0
⅝	⅜	Pathfinder Mins♦	½	...	...	-5.0
134	60½	Petra Diamonds	97½	-2½	...	3.2
4	1¼	Petrel Resources♦	1¼	...	...	-6.8
4¾	1⅝	Petro Matad♦	1⅝	...	...	-7.8
157⅞	93⅛	Petrofac	102⅝	-3¼	...	-2.6
4⅜	½	Petroneft Res♦	¾	...	...	-2.2
22¼	⅞	Petropavlovsk#	1⅛	-⅛	...	1.6
7½	3½	Phoenix Global♦	6½	+¼	...	-1.6
10	1¾	Plexus Holdings♦	2⅜	...	...	-0.6
1473	92	Polymetal Intl	243	+7	40.1	...
772	499	Porvair	534	+14	0.9	20.5
11¾	2¾	Prospex Energy♦	11	+¾	...	...
22¾	8½	Proton Motor Power S♦	11¼	...	...	-2.0
4	1¾	Providence Res♦	3¼	...	...	29.0
3¼	1	Quadrise Fuels Intl♦	2⅜	+⅛	...	-9.2
40½	3½	Rambler Met&Min♦#	5⅜	+¼	...	0.1
⅜	...	Reabold Resources♦	¼	...	...	-4.8
⅝	¼	Red Rock Res♦	¼	...	...	-1.9
7219½	4956¾	Rio Tinto Ltd	5877¼	+27¾	8.5	6.1
6225	4375½	**Rio Tinto**	5378	-9	9.3	5.6
41⅛	34	San Leon Energy♦	37½	+¾	...	14.0
⅞	⅛	Scirocco Energy♦	⅛	...	...	...
77	22½	Serabi Gold♦	28	...	...	3.8
450	195¾	Serica Energy♦‡	297	+2	1.1	...
12½	6¾	Shanta Gold♦‡	10	+⅝	1.0	6.3
2526½	1556⅛	**Shell**‡	2356½	-26	2.5	12.4
2⅞	⅞	Sound Energy♦	1	...	...	6.5
⅛	...	Sunrise Resources♦	⅛	...	...	...
¼	...	Tertiary Minerals♦	⅛	...	...	-5.0
⅞	⅜	Thor Mining♦	⅜	...	...	-2.6
5210¾	3546¼	Total Eng SE	4988⅜	+45½	4.5	11.4
⅜	⅛	Tower Resources♦	⅛	...	...	-3.8
62⅛	36¾	Tullow Oil	45⅛	+¼	...	4.5
⅛	...	UK Oil & Gas♦	...	...	...	-2.2
460	135	URU Metals♦	220	...	...	7.1
2⅝	⅛	Vast Res♦	⅛	...	...	...
5½	2⅞	Victoria Oil&Gas♦#	3¾	...	...	-1.8
6	2⅛	W Resources♦#	2⅝	...	...	-0.3
8⅛	2⅜	Westmount Engy♦	2⅜	...	...	-0.5
251⅝	104½	Wood Grp (J)	161⅞	+1⅞	...	-6.6
8	2	Woodbois♦	2	...	...	7.7
7	2⅞	Xtract Resources♦	2⅞	-⅜	...	-5.2
7¾	4	Zephyr Energy♦	6	-¼	...	-7.8

Professional & support services

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
4060	2240	4imprint Grp	4000	-5	0.2	67.5
555	457	Andrews Sykes♦	480	...	4.8	15.3
6442	3359	**Ashtead**	5068	+42	0.8	24.6
39	5¼	Asimilar Group♦	6¾	...	...	0.3
170	58	AssetCo♦	58	...	...	0.3
50½	36	Avisen♦	46	...	...	...
148	100	Begbies Traynor♦	138	+1	2.1	...
257½	155	Blancco Tech♦	172½	...	...	61.8
3163	2575	**Bunzl**‡	3083	-8	1.7	23.3
48¾	20⅛	Capita	26⅝	+⅝	...	2.0
51½	39½	CEPS♦	39½	...	...	-8.9
130	89	Christie Group♦	115	...	...	48.9
1969½	1453½	**Compass**	1822½	+11½	0.7	44.3
400	97	CPPGroup♦	107½	-2½	27.9	...
92	53½	Croma Security♦	56½	...	3.5	8.1
6486	4408	**DCC**‡	4408	+28	3.6	14.5
173	73	De La Rue	77	-23	...	10.1
3460	2158	Diploma	2852	+52	1.4	51.0
1062	597	Discoverie	914	+43	1.1	74.9
68	23½	Driver Group♦	26	+½	5.7	12.3
357	175⅛	Essentra	249½	+7	2.1	28.0
3667	2285	**Experian**	2944	+51	1.1	37.7
13305	8680	Ferguson‡	9948	-137	1.8	14.6
250	210	FIH Group♦	240	...	...	...
156½	53½	Gattaca♦	73½	-1½	2.0	...
6⅛	4⅛	Grafenia♦	5¾	-¼	...	-4.2
610	317	Hargeaves Serv♦	341	-3½	2.1	3.5
1192	608½	**Homeserve**	1191	-3	2.1	...
655	413	Impellam Grp♦‡	580	...	...	31.6
45⅜	4	Ince G♦	5¾	+⅜	...	3.3
5782	3619	**Intertek**	3860	-42	2.7	21.7
305½	115⅜	IWG	166	+2⅞	...	-6.3
162	77	Johnson Srvce♦	95½	-½	...	59.6
137½	99	Journeo♦	113	-1	...	25.3
122¾	56½	Kier Gp	63⅞	-⅛	...	6.2
1400	1080	Latham (J)♦	1330	-10	1.5	7.2
1085	695	Lok'n Store♦	970	+15	1.5	29.4
3850	2300	Lon Security♦‡	2300	-250	3.4	12.6
440	220	LSL Prop Services	260	...	...	7.2
138½	86	Macfarlane	102½	+½	2.6	11.8
385	185	Maintel Hldgs♦	190	...	...	5.8
3750	8¼	Malvern Intl♦	12	+½	...	...
224	181	Mears Group	192½	-2½	1.3	16.7
608	255	Menzies (John)	607	-1	...	48.0
79¾	46⅜	Mitie Gp	75¼	...	...	37.6
14¾	3¾	MobilityOne♦	10¼	-½	...	7.6
44½	25	Newmark Sec♦	33	+½	...	-8.2
8	3¾	Norm Broadbent♦	3¾	...	...	-7.0
66½	44½	Northern Bear♦	46½	...	...	4.7
286	193	NWF Grp♦‡	267	+11	2.7	...
678	362⅛	PageGroup	489⅜	+2	0.9	13.2
73	47½	PCI-PAL♦	53	...	...	...
13	8¼	Petards♦	9¾	...	...	17.7
26½	17½	PHSC♦	18	...	5.5	32.7
5⅛	⅞	PowerHouse Egy♦	1½	...	...	-2.6
85	61	Record	77	+1	2.9	21.1
440½	283½	Redde Northgate	368	+3	4.1	9.2
872	555	Renew Hldgs♦	654	+6	2.0	16.1
851	489	Renewi	554	+4	...	11.7
635⅜	444½	**Rentokil Itl**	539¾	-2	1.3	38.2
504	325	Restore♦	325	-5	0.7	38.6
485	331½	Ricardo‡	435	-10	1.5	38.8
862	440	Robert Walters	562	+2	2.9	12.8
20	10	Roebuck Food Grp♦	13	...	...	1.9
239	92	RPS Group	219	-1	0.1	...
1255	812	**RS Group**	975½	+4½	2.6	24.7
47½	18	RTC Group♦	18	...	...	...
654	264⅜	RWS Hldgs♦	332	+5	2.7	30.4
457	350	Science Group♦	390	...	1.0	17.9
188¼	121⅛	Serco Gp	168	-2	1.3	6.8
42½	27½	Smiths News	41⅝	+¾	1.2	4.0
4168	2452	**Smurfit Kappa**	3058	+7	3.2	13.9
65⅞	36¼	Staffline Gp♦	41⅞	+⅜	...	32.2
576	317½	SThree‡	400	-5	2.0	12.9
137½	90	Synectics♦	112½	...	...	...
34½	17¾	Thruvision Group♦	22	...	...	-8.0
106	58½	Tribal♦	58½	...	2.0	18.2
102½	49	Vianet♦	56¾	+1	...	...
1010	660	Vp	690	+20	3.6	17.0
4½	1	Westminster♦	2⅛	...	...	-2.6

Retailing

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
131½	37⅞	AO World	68	+6⅞	...	...
644	295½	**B&M European**‡	414	+13	4.1	9.6
44	20¼	Brown (N)♦	23	+⅞	...	6.7
74⅜	40⅜	Card Factory	74⅜	+1⅜	...	...
2425	1549	CVS Group♦‡	1980	+53	0.3	55.4
283	104¾	DFS Furn	147½	+2⅜	5.0	7.8
1434	670½	Dunelm‡	998	+13½	3.5	13.4
949½	562½	**Frasers Group**	886	+34	...	39.3
3416	1673	Greggs	2268	+28	0.6	19.8
370	124⅝	Halfords	198	-15½	2.5	6.6
942⅛	480⅞	Howden Join	605¾	+3	2.2	11.4
928	647	Inchcape	875	+9½	1.5	29.5
7	1⅝	IQ-AI	2	...	...	-5.7
234	89⅛	**JD Sports**	126¼	+2⅞	0.2	15.2
356	203	**Kingfisher**	253½	+3⅝	4.7	6.3
101	56⅜	Lookers‡	76⅜	+⅛	...	4.9
256⅞	93⅛	Marks Spencer	125⅝	+2¾	...	96.6
19⅝	6	Mothercare♦	6½	-⅛	...	-4.1
680	75½	Naked Wines♦	93½	-½	...	...
8426	4383	**Next**	5716	+14	...	10.9
1897½	393	**Ocado Gp**	657½	+26⅜	...	...
28¾	18½	Pendragon	28⅜	...	...	8.8
483½	257¾	Pets at Home	288½	-15⅜	2.7	11.7
320	72⅞	Saga	95⅜	+3	...	...
299	169⅞	**Sainsbury J**‡	223¼	+2½	4.7	18.7
1708½	1132½	Smith WH	1388	-9	...	...
34¾	14¼	Sosandar♦	22	...	...	...
3⅛	1¼	Stanley Gbbns♦	1½	...	...	-1.6
241	103	Studio Retail#	115	-2½	...	2.4
156	69½	Ted Baker	109¾	...	...	...
303⅜	199⅛	**Tesco**‡	236	+1	3.8	12.0
68	38	Topps Tiles	39½	...	...	7.1

Technology

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
155	90	Access Intell♦	90	-2	...	...
163½	81½	Aferian plc♦	89	...	3.3	15.9
209	137	Alfa Financial	154	...	0.6	24.1
22¾	8¼	Allied Minds	9⅝	+⅛	...	-0.8
589	290	Aptitude Software	364	+1	1.4	40.9
721	465	Avast	716½	-3½	1.6	28.5
3439	1924	**Aveva Gp**‡	3181	+6	1.2	...
206½	126½	Bango♦	192½	...	...	...
84	26¼	BATM Adv Coms	28½	-1	2.5	11.9
34	8¾	Berkeley Res	18	-¼	...	-7.6
32	12¾	Blackbird♦	13½	-¾	...	...
1⅞	⅞	CloudCoCo Group♦	1⅛	...	...	-2.8
2978	1810	Computacenter	2046	-2	2.7	12.7
96	65½	Concurrent Tech♦	80	-½	3.1	19.0
14½	9¼	Corero♦	9½	...	...	...
2640	1340	Craneware♦	2190	+20	1.2	99.8
3	1¾	Crimson Tide♦	2¼	...	...	15.0
27¾	11¼	CyanConn Hldgs♦	13⅛	-⅝	...	...
365	221	D4t4 Solutions♦	253	-3	1.1	29.9
1	...	DeepMatter Gp♦	...	...	...	-0.4
24	13	Dillistone Group♦	16	...	...	-4.6
1⅜	¼	EQTEC♦	⅜	...	...	-4.5
1280	599	FDM Group	730	+15	5.8	25.3
16¾	9	Filtronic♦	12	...	...	32.4
2450	1230	First Derivts♦	1454	-2	...	...
875½	330	GB Group♦	378½	+3	1.6	28.9
183	136	GreshamTech	158½	+1	0.4	...
193½	32	Ilika♦	32	-2	...	-9.0
124	71½	Ingenta♦	124	+3½	1.2	72.5
87½	38	Intercede♦	57½	...	...	19.8
200	118	Iomart♦	119	...	5.9	13.0
50⅜	28⅛	IQE♦	50	+⅝	...	...
179	115½	K3 Business Tch♦	120	+2	...	-2.0
2394	1103⅝	LG Electronics	1363⅝	+33⅝	...	3.6
½	⅛	Location Sciences♦	⅛	...	...	-2.0
527	256¼	Micro Focus Intl	517⅛	+1½	3.4	-5.4
82½	45	MTI Wireless♦	56	+2⅞	3.2	18.6
52⅜	17	Nanoco Gp	37⅜	+2⅜	...	...
93½	52	Netcall♦	83½	...	0.4	...
69½	46	Northamber♦	46	...	2.1	...
60	10¼	Online Blockchain♦	15¼	...	...	-8.0
126½	76½	Oxford Metrics♦	90	+2	2.0	39.1
9	6¼	Parity♦	6¼	...	...	-9.0
40	29	Pennant Intl♦	36	...	...	...
770	390¾	Playtech	553½	-3	...	5.8
394⅛	243	QinetiQ	346⅛	-2	3.2	27.0
210	20½	RM	37⅝	+1⅛	12.4	7.5
853¾	595½	**Sage Gp**	817⅛	+8¾	2.1	31.3
12	5¼	Seeing Machines♦	6¾	-⅛	...	...
139	74	Shearwater Grp♦	115½	+4½	...	71.5
85	31½	Smartspace S'ware♦	43	...	...	-4.5
1967	1084	Softcat‡	1290	+27	1.6	25.2
284	215⅜	Spirent Comms	284	+1¾	1.6	26.4
50	24¾	SRT Marine♦	47¾	+1	...	...
929¾	475⅞	Tele. Ericsson	512⅛	+2½	3.5	9.3
86	70	Touchstar♦	85	...	...	...
1077½	825	Tracsis♦	920	+5	...	...
27	14½	Trakm8♦	15¼	...	...	...
165	112	Triad Grp	132½	...	1.5	14.5
632	222½	Wandisco♦	632	+2	...	...
1270	560	Water Intel♦	700	...	...	38.5
273	144½	Xaar	211	+6½	...	...
13	2¼	Yourgene♦	2¼	...	...	-1.5
185	96⅜	Zoo Digital♦	182½	...	...	...

Telecoms

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
226	102½	AdEPT Technology♦	107½	-10	...	...
170⅞	107¾	**Airtel Africa**‡	117¼	+1⅝	2.7	10.4
200⅞	114	**BT Group**	124¾	...	...	12.1
135½	55½	Currys plc	85⅛	-⅛	...	4.0
1796	1012	Gamma Comms♦	1100	+2	1.1	19.9
175	100¼	Helios Towers	121⅛	+1⅝	...	...
5365	1103½	Just Eat T'away	1800	+9¾	...	-3.8
½	⅛	Mobile Streams♦	⅛	...	...	-2.0
2½	⅝	Mobile Tornado♦	1	...	...	-5.8
2400	1274	Telecom Plus	2400	+55	2.3	61.5
139½	94⅝	**Vodafone Gp**	94⅝	-¼	8.1	...

Transport

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
340	201	Braemar Ship	330½	+8	1.5	10.9
727⅜	285	easyJet	386½	+10⅝	...	-2.4
14⅜	4½	Esken Limited	6	...	...	-0.2
139½	88½	FirstGroup‡	104⅛	+2⅜	...	24.8
510	251	Fisher (James)	325	+13	...	-5.8
178¼	93⅝	**Intl Cons Air**	132¼	+½	...	-2.9
526¾	183⅛	Int Distrib Serv	238	-6⅛	4.2	2.7
402½	262¼	Irish Cont Uts	389	+30	...	...
...	...	Jet2♦	891¾	+24⅜	...	-4.7
284⅛	161¼	Natl Express	173	+3⅜	...	...
1050	820	Ocean Wilson	885	-10	9.0	4.5
106⅛	68⅜	Stagecoach	104⅝	...	...	14.7
24½	19½	Sutton Harbour♦	22	...	...	...
424	282	Wincanton	362	...	2.8	9.8
4867	1357½	Wizz Air Hldgs	2122	+110	...	-4.8

Utilities

12 month High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld%	P/E
94⅝	64¾	**Centrica**	94⅝	-⅛	...	9.5
258	178	ContourGlobal‡	251	+½	5.1	28.3
831½	473⅜	Drax Group	622½	-3½	2.8	46.1
627½	485	Jersey Electricity	506	+22	3.3	9.6
1245½	858⅜	**Natl Grid**	1032	+½	4.7	24.0
13¼	5¾	OPG Power♦	6¾	-⅛	...	4.4
1237	755	Pennon	986	+22	3.3	71.4
⅝	⅜	Rurelec♦	½	...	...	-0.4
3211	2213	**Severn Trent**	2793	+54	3.6	...
1920	1428	**SSE**	1720	-3½	4.7	6.7
1176½	828⅛	**Utd Utilities**	1052	+18½	4.1	96.5

♦AIM company; # Price at suspension; † Ex dividend; ‡ Ex scrip; ▲ Ex rights issue; ▼ Ex all; § Ex capital distribution; * figures or report awaited; . . . No significant data. Companies in bold are constituents of the FTSE 100 Index. Investment Cos sector Nav Dis or Prm supplied by Morningstar.

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Obituaries

Wilko Johnson

Wild-eyed guitarist and songwriter with Dr Feelgood who paved the way for punk and defied the odds after a devastating cancer diagnosis

Eyes popping and strutting like a marionette on speed, Wilko Johnson cut a striking figure on stage, both as lead guitarist with Dr Feelgood and in a long and respected solo career.

He made his name with the band known affectionately as "the Feelgoods", a raucous rhythm and blues outfit that helped to reinvigorate British rock music in the mid-1970s and opened the door to the insurrection that was punk. His guitar playing eschewed the self-indulgent, extended solos of his peers in favour of a stripped-down style built around frenetic, choppy chords and primal R'n'B riffs, dispatched with slashing ferocity.

Johnson and Dr Feelgood emerged from the amiable 1970s phenomenon known as "pub rock", but there was nothing amiable about the "in yer face" style of their music or the sweaty, boozy anarchy of their live shows. They looked as threatening as they sounded, too, scowling out from beneath short haircuts and dressed in ill-fitting off-the-peg jackets — a pointed "no fashion" statement, which seemed openly to mock the theatrical garb of Led Zeppelin or the Rolling Stones.

Their refusal to follow fashion was in itself eye-catching and Johnson was the group's main visual attraction, a tall, gangly man dressed in a grubby black suit that made him resemble a night-

An 11-hour operation removed a tumour that was the size of a baby

club bouncer rather than a rock star, the anti-fashion look offset by an institutional "pudding bowl" haircut and an unsettling stare to rival Anthony Perkins in *Psycho*.

Yet Johnson was remarkable not just for his style and musicianship. In January 2013 he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, told it was terminal and that he had only months to live. He met the news with equanimity. "It was a surprise," he said. "But it didn't disturb me. I was alive and realised you are existing in the moment. You're not worried about the tax return. And it's a bloody good feeling being alive."

He chose not to undergo chemotherapy and announced a farewell tour, so that he could go out doing the thing that he said had made his life "such an extraordinarily full and eventful experience". His attitude led to an outpouring of emotion from fans, yet he defied medical science and was still around for another tour in 2014. "I have had a brilliant year," he declared. "I honestly didn't know people felt about me like that. I knew they liked the music, but I've had so many letters full of personal affection for me, as though they were writing for a friend. I think that was the most moved I've ever been."

Going Back Home, an album recorded with the Who's singer Roger Daltrey and released in early 2014, earned him his best reviews in years. He promoted the record with a series of self-deprecating interviews in which, without a hint of self-pity, he declared: "I'm really sorry I've got to die because I want to do a lot more of this. But otherwise dying's not so bad, you know." He told The Times's Will Hodgkinson that before his diagnosis he suffered from depression, but "now I just want to stop worrying and do as much as I can in the time left".

GUS STEWART/GETTY IMAGES







Wilko Johnson performing live in about 1975, with his bandmates (from left) Lee Brilleaux, John Sparks and John Martin, and the 2014 album with Roger Daltrey

Daltrey, visibly moved by his collaborator's fortitude, noted that "our postwar rock'n'roll generation taught people how to live and enjoy their lives. Now here's Wilko showing us how to die."

A plan for Johnson to make an appearance at Glastonbury in June 2014 had to be cancelled due to his illness; after almost 18 months of refusing treatment, he was admitted to hospital for an operation to remove a tumour and parts of his stomach and intestines. "It was an 11-hour operation. This tumour weighed 3kg — that's the size of a baby. Anyway, they got it all," he said, announcing that the disease was less aggressive than originally thought. After a period of convalescence he was, astonishingly, "cancer-free" and coming to terms with the idea that he would live — which he did to the full for another eight years.

When Johnson rose to fame with Dr Feelgood in the 1970s, he insisted that the band, based on Canvey Island, played tough R'n'B, mixing covers with his own songs that cut across the decade's prevailing trends of prog and glam-rock. There had been nothing like Dr Feelgood since the heyday of the Who and the Rolling Stones during the first British R'n'B boom a decade earlier. Their records were unsophisticated and wilfully so, a conscious attempt to revisit the raw energy that had fuelled the birth of rock'n'roll and which had, somewhere along the way, got lost in half-baked triple concept albums and drug-addled excess.

In Julien Temple's 2009 documentary film, *Oil City Confidential*, Johnson and the Feelgoods were portrayed as a gang of bank robbers with guitars, dashing into town to pull off a job at one venue or another, then heading back to the badlands of Essex and their home in the shadows of the refineries on the island they renamed "Oil City". Johnson lived in Essex all his life, later moving to Westcliff-on-Sea. "I love the Thames estuary," he said. "This part of Essex, with the powerlines and the windmills and the industry, it makes the landscape what it is."

The Feelgoods' natural forte was the three-minute single — clipped, classic R'n'B tunes such as *Roxette*, *She Does It Right* and *Back in the Night*, all written by Johnson. When the group came to make their debut album, *Down by the Jetty* (1975), they recorded it live in the studio with no overdubs and released it in mono, an act of defiance at a time when making a record for most groups involved months of multi-tracking and studio trickery. It was followed by the equally earthy and strident *Malpractice*. Both albums sold reasonably but it was their third release, *Stupidity*, that was their breakthrough. Recorded live, it brilliantly captured the guts and gore of their club performances, with storming covers of songs by the likes of Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley.

The album made its way to the top of the British charts in the first week of its release in 1976, just as the first wave of punk groups was noisily starting to kick over the traces. It briefly made Johnson and his colleagues the biggest new band in Britain. They were not punks in the accepted fashion, but were a crucial influence on the revolution. "John the Baptists to the Sex Pistols' savage messiahs, an advance guard for the havoc that followed," as the *Melody Maker* editor Allan Jones later put it.

Yet Johnson did not hang around to enjoy the kudos. During the making of Dr Feelgood's fourth album, he fell out acrimoniously with the group's singer Lee Brilleaux and walked out, never to return. He subsequently claimed he had been fired, although the rest of the group said he had walked. Relations had soured on a disappointing American tour (not helped, perhaps, by Johnson being teetotal at the time, unlike his hard-drinking bandmates), but he later said that he was at a loss to explain why he had fallen out with them. "It grew into this great animosity between Lee and myself," he said. "As far as I know, I never did him any wrong, and I know he never did me any wrong. So what that bad feeling was based on, I do not know. But it was certainly strong." The pair remained unreconciled when Brilleaux died of cancer in 1994.

Born John Peter Wilkinson in 1947 on Canvey Island, Essex, he attended Westcliff High School for Boys and played guitar in various juvenile bands, modelling his style on Mick Green of Johnny Kidd and the Pirates. After graduating from Newcastle University, where he read English and developed an ability to quote Shakespeare and Piers Plowman with ease, he travelled the "hippy trail", the overland route to India. By 1972 he was back in Essex, where he worked for a year as an English teacher and joined the Pigboy Charlie Band, changing his stage name to Wilko Johnson, an anagram of his birth name.

Shortly after his arrival the group became Dr Feelgood (an American slang term for a doctor willing to prescribe mind-altering drugs), with a line-up that included Brilleaux on vocals and harmonica, John Sparks on bass and his childhood friend John Martin (known as "the Big Figure") on drums. Johnson and his colleagues found work as the backing band for Heinz (formerly of the Tornados), supported Hawkwind and Brinsley Schwarz on tour and built a sturdy reputation playing their own gigs on the London pub circuit.

Acclaim in the music press led to a recording contract with United Artists. Yet by 1977, Johnson was out of the band. At the time the loss of the group's essential force looked like a fatal blow to the Feelgoods, although in the event they soldiered on and found renewed success. Johnson formed the Solid Senders, who released one album in 1978, which made little impact. He then joined the Blockheads and played on Ian Dury's 1980 album, *Laughter*. After that he concentrated on leading the Wilko Johnson Band, with an ever-changing line-up. He released a string of albums including *Ice on the Motorway* (1981), *Going Back Home* (1998) and *Red Hot Rocking Blues* (2005).

He was devastated by the death of his wife Irene (née Knight) from cancer in 2004. She was his childhood sweetheart and the couple were married for more than 30 years; he once said that if he had believed in an afterlife, he would have killed himself to be with her. Music was his solace: "You just snap into a different consciousness. The broken heart is suddenly not the important thing. The important thing is doing the show." He is survived by their two sons, Matthew, who works in Dubai, and Simon, who plays guitar in the band Eight Rounds Rapid.

Away from music, he was a keen painter and amateur astronomer who built a dome on his roof to house a telescope. He published an autobiography, *Looking Back At Me* (2012), and never reunited with the Feelgoods, but played a big part in assembling the group's box set, *All Through the City*, a collection of the four Dr Feelgood albums on which Johnson had played, augmented by unreleased material from his archives.

After his brush with death he felt he had won "extra time" and continued to play with the Wilko Johnson Band, releasing another album, *Blow Your Mind*, in 2018. His last gig was at the O2 Shepherd's Bush Empire in London only last month.

In recent years Johnson also had a role in the hit fantasy TV series *Game of Thrones* as the mute executioner Ser Ilyn Payne. The familiar eye-popping stare before wielding his sword was all the talking he needed to do.

Wilko Johnson, musician, was born on July 12, 1947. He died of undisclosed causes on November 21, 2022, aged 75

Register

Gael Greene

Influential restaurant critic whose waspish, first-person reviews made her much feared by New York's finest establishments

No one had ever written about restaurants in quite the same way as Gael Greene after she joined New York magazine as a critic in 1968. Although she claimed to feel like an impostor, she rapidly gained an audience for her forthright, first-person accounts not only of the food on the plate but also the atmospherics and the customers themselves.

She developed into a proponent of what became known as New Journalism, particularly as practised by Tom Wolfe, where imaginary dialogue and speculative details of the motives of the subject came into play.

Over 40 years at New York magazine, Greene said she treated her restaurant reviews as theatre. There was a strong emphasis on the sensuousness of the experience, which included intimate details of her dining companions and sometimes the chefs.

Commandingly tall and instantly recognisable in her trademark large floppy hats, she could instil fear in the most prominent restaurants in Manhattan. On one occasion at the Four Seasons in the Seagram Building, the maitre d' simply greeted her with "Hi, Gael", which led to her denouncing him in print for not showing more respect. She once said that a food critic should be a hermit and have no friends, though she added, "Like so many wise rules, impossible to live up to."

After retiring, she conceded that she had "dedicated myself to the wanton indulgence of my senses". In 1977 she wrote a review headlined "I Love Le Cirque But Can I Be Trusted?", as she was having an affair with the restaurant's chef Jean Louis Todeschini.

Other conquests included a one-night stand with Elvis Presley in her early twenties while she was working for United Press. Later, the only detail she recalled was that as she was about to leave his hotel room, he asked if she would mind calling room service and ordering him a fried-egg sandwich. There were also close encounters with Clint Eastwood, Burt Lancaster, a French de Rothschild and Jamie Gillis, a US porn star portrayed in the film *Boogie Nights*.

She wrote bestselling accounts of her sexual adventures and preferences such as *Sex and the College Girl* (1964), and *Delicious Sex* (1986), concluding: "Indeed, for me the two greatest discoveries of the 20th century were the Cuisinart and the clitoris."

Gael Greene was born in 1933 in Detroit. Her father owned a clothing store called Nate Greene's. After enrolling in the College of Architecture at the University of Michigan, she soon realised it was the wrong course and spent a year at the Sorbonne in Paris, where her interest in restaurants began. On her return to Michigan, she enrolled in an arts degree and graduated in 1955. She initially worked as a general reporter for United Press before joining the New York Post for three years as a feature writer.

After a one night stand with Elvis, she ordered him a fried-egg sandwich

In 1961 she married Donald Forst, an editor at the New York Post and later editor of the Village Voice, before divorcing him 13 years later. There were no children.

She freelanced for Cosmopolitan, the Ladies' Home Journal, McCall's and the New York Herald Tribune before joining New York magazine in 1968.

One of her early successes was a guide to the favourite restaurants of mafia bosses in New York. "Characteristically, the menu is narrowly southern — souvenir of Naples, Calabria and Sicily; the bread is crusty and irresistible; the flowers are faded plastic; murals celebrate the Bay of Naples. You dine with judges, pols, fuzz in mufti, expatriate Italians from the suburbs, beehive-headed dolls in purple leather minis and stiletto heels … and maybe, seven solemn dons along the same side of a banquet table, their backs against the wall." She also recounted the demise of the gangster "Little Augie Pisano", who "was shot to death with Gian Marino's recipe for clam sauce in his pocket … Little Augie departed still garlicky and glowing from his last supper … Today Gian Marino's clam sauce is hardly worth getting shot for. It is stingily ladled over gummy linguini and under-garlicked."

WWD/GETTY IMAGES



Greene, at Tavern on the Green in 1976, also founded a food charity in New York

In the early Eighties she founded Citymeals on Wheels, a charity that provides meals to aged and impoverished housebound New Yorkers, which has provided 65 million meals since its creation and still delivers two million meals annually.

She continued to visit Europe on a regular basis and got to know, in more ways than one, many prominent chefs at three-star Michelin restaurants.

In the late Eighties, Jeremiah Tower, then the leading California chef with his San Francisco restaurant Stars, would often fly to New York with his key chefs and staff, hire a stretch limousine and visit three New York restaurants in a night that she had recently recommended.

With her knowledge of contemporary European cuisine, starting with nouvelle cuisine in the Seventies, she was unafraid of taking on leading French chefs such as Alain Ducasse if she thought their New York efforts were not up to scratch.

In 2000, shortly after Ducasse opened Essex House in New York, she made several visits for lunch and dinner before printing a damning review. She was unimpressed by the "gimmicks", such as providing a dozen different knives to choose from to eat the pigeon d'Anjou or the 20 fountain pens to peruse before signing the astronomical bill, which was higher than either of his three-star establishments in France and Monaco. "These recipes he claims to create in his head … they are too intellectual, too contrived. Narcissus is in love with his own gimmicks. The food has no emotion. If the emperor is naked, we will drape him in a tablecloth to give him time to get his ermine back from the Laundromat. Open to anything? Yes, we are. But in the end, we're not so easily fooled."

Greene failed to see the point of what were termed small plates in recent times: "Sociologists used to think they could track the rise and fall of the economy by the length of women's skirts. Then fashion got hopelessly permissive. Perhaps the size of plates is a better indicator. In the dotcom euphoria, dishes had to be tall. Now restaurants boast their plates are small — perfect for a generation down marketing, pinching dollars, and running from commitment to serious dinner."

Her demise as a restaurant critic was as stinging as one of her reviews when she was fired by New York magazine in 2008. She admitted to The New York Times that it was a "narcissistic shock … as I thought I was a brand at New York magazine".

Gael Greene, restaurant critic, was born on December 22, 1933. She died of cancer on November 1, 2022, aged 88

Hebe de Bonafini

Co-founder of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo who protested against Argentina's military junta after her two sons disappeared

At 3.30pm on Thursday, April 30, 1977, a group of women in white headscarves walked anticlockwise around the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires, a stone's throw from the Casa Rosada presidential palace.

They held placards bearing the smiling faces of their children while walking in pairs; public assemblies were banned and to march in groups of three or more carried the risk of arrest. People kept their distance and averted their gaze as Hebe de Bonafini, a 49-year-old seamstress with square glasses, grabbed a microphone and exclaimed: "Where are our children? When will justice be done?"

In March 1976 a military junta had seized control of Argentina and begun a seven-year "Dirty War" during which it is claimed some 30,000 people were murdered in a state-sponsored crackdown on presumed left-wing subversives. Official estimates place the figure at 8,960.

De Bonafini's 26-year-old son Jorge disappeared in February 1977, followed two months later by her youngest son, Raúl. Both members of Marxist-Leninist parties, they were never seen again. "I didn't sit down and cry," de Bonafini recalled. "I felt as if I had a great big hole inside but I kept thinking that I'd go crazy if I stood still."

On her tours of the police station, the ministry of the interior, hospitals, court houses and morgues, she kept running into the same two-dozen grieving mothers. One of them, Azucena Villaflor, suggested they meet at the Plaza de Mayo. "The one thing we all had in common was the tragic expression we wore," said de Bonafini.



Despite death threats and intimidation from the police, they gathered at the same time every Thursday, growing in size until the Association of Mothers of Plaza de Mayo was born. The "Mad Mothers", as they were dubbed, began donning white headscarves and nappies in honour of their lost children. De Bonafini was affectionately nicknamed *Lo Gordo* (the fat one).

Retribution was swift. By the end of 1977 three of the leaders, including Villaflor, were kidnapped and killed. From that point the group came under the sway of the defiant de Bonafini.

They continued to meet in bars, churches and squares until 1980 when a woman from the Netherlands sent them money to set up an office, which became known as Casa de las Madres.

International recognition of their cause increased, yet the arrests and beatings of the regime's perceived opponents grew more brutal.

The mothers continued to protest after the collapse of the regime in 1983 following Argentina's defeat by the UK in the Falklands conflict the year before. In 1985 they split into two factions. De Bonafini headed the more powerful and radical wing, which called for systemic political change, while the more moderate "Founding Line" highlighted the need for less confrontation with the government. The Mothers would be nominated for the Nobel peace prize several times.

Hebe María Pastor de Bonafini was born in 1928 in Ensenada, a port city outside Buenos Aires. Her Spanish father, Francisco Pastor, worked in a haberdashery. Her mother, Josefa Bogetti, was a housewife.

Hebe was not allowed to finish school because her parents could not afford the bus fare. However, at the age of 12 she resolved to "do things freely, or whatever could be called free within the confines of being from a poor family in a poor neighbourhood".

Her mother sent her to sewing school, but she was kicked out for refusing to work. When she learnt to weave she found the loom a little more exciting, but she still could not understand "why men could do certain things and women certain other things".

At 18 she married Humberto Bonafini, a mechanic. She would help in his garage but found "it was a cardinal sin for a woman to get grease on herself". She proposed to go back to high school when her children did, but her husband forbade her. Instead she started a co-operative selling knitted clothes. Humberto died of cancer in 1982 and she is survived by their daughter, Alejandra.

As her sons became more educated, she learnt with them. "One day Jorge asked me what I thought was necessary to share," she recalled. "I told him that when you have a little left over, you give it away. He replied that I was very mistaken: that the little that one had, one should share. This phrase of his marked me for the rest of my life."

When Salvador Allende's government in Chile fell in 1973, Jorge said that the same would happen in Argentina, and she began to listen more closely to the issues he discussed.

De Bonafini's activism could border on the extreme: she supported terrorist guerrilla organisations such as the Farc in Colombia and drew criticism after 9/11 for saying she felt "great joy" because "the most terrorist state is the United States". She was prosecuted in 2017, at the age of 88, for embezzling public funds earmarked for a low-income housing project.

Yet 45 years on, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo are still considered one of the most powerful human rights organisations in South America. They continue to march every Thursday against what they claim is the centre-right government's whitewashing of the memory of the "disappeared".

"We've learnt how to be happy again," de Bonafini said nine years after the first protest. "The movement gave me life. Sometimes people ask me if we cry. Even in that, our children showed us the way."

Hebe de Bonafini, co-founder of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo, was born on December 4, 1928. She died on November 20, 2022, aged 93

Email: obituaries@thetimes.co.uk

Court Circular

Buckingham Palace
23rd November, 2022
The President of the Republic of South Africa, accompanied by The Earl of Wessex, this morning visited the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey, and was received by the Chairman of Trustees (Dame Amelia Fawcett) and Mr Richard Deverell (Director).

The President and His Royal Highness toured the Temperate House, viewed exhibits illustrating the Gardens' partnership with South Africa and attended a Meeting.

The President of the Republic of South Africa, accompanied by The Earl of Wessex, later visited the Francis Crick Institute, 1 Midland Rd, London NW1, and was received by Sir Paul Nurse (Chief Executive Officer) and the Chairman of the Board (the Lord Browne of Madingley).

The President and His Royal Highness, escorted by the Chief Executive Officer, toured the Institute, receiving a briefing on the Institute's Covid Legacy study and the collaboration between the Institute and the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and viewed a demonstration of the robot sequencer.

His Excellency and The Earl of Wessex thereafter witnessed the signing of two Memoranda of Understanding on Health and Science and met members of the South African community working at the Institute.

The President of the Republic of South Africa this afternoon visited No 10 Downing Street, where His Excellency had talks with the Prime Minister and subsequently was entertained to Luncheon by the Prime Minister on behalf of His Majesty's Government.

The President, accompanied by the Rt Hon Olukemi Badenoch MP (Secretary of State for International Trade), afterwards attended the United Kingdom-South Africa Business Forum at Lancaster House, Stable Yard, St James's, London SW1, where, having been received by Mr Andrew Selous MP (Prime Minister's Trade Envoy for South Africa), His Excellency gave a speech.

The President of the Republic of South Africa, with the South African Suite in attendance, subsequently took leave of The King at Buckingham Palace.

The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer MP (Leader of the Opposition) later called upon The President at the Corinthia Hotel, Whitehall Place, London SW1.

The President of the Republic of South Africa this evening received an Address of Welcome at a Court of Common Council and afterwards was entertained at a Banquet by the Rt Hon the Lord Mayor and Corporation of London at Guildhall.

The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester were present.

The King this morning visited the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn, 8 South Square, London WC1, and was received by His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London (Sir Kenneth Olisa) and the Treasurer (Sir Peter Gross).

His Majesty met staff, students and barristers in the Hall before meeting pupils from City Junior School which is based in the grounds of the Inn.

The King afterwards visited Barts Heritage at St Bartholomew's Hospital, West Smithfield, London EC1, and was received by the Rt Hon the Lord Mayor (Alderman Nicholas Lyons), the Chief Executive Officer of the Hospital (Professor Charles Knight) and Mr William Pain (Chief Executive Officer, Barts Heritage).

His Majesty met supporters, craftspeople and conservators involved with Barts Heritage prior to the start of restoration work, before meeting medical and other hospital staff and patients.

The King this afternoon visited the Goldsmiths' Centre, 42 Britton Street, London EC1, and was received by the Prime Warden of the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths (the Lord Bridges) and the Chief Executive of the Goldsmiths' Centre (Sir David Reddaway).

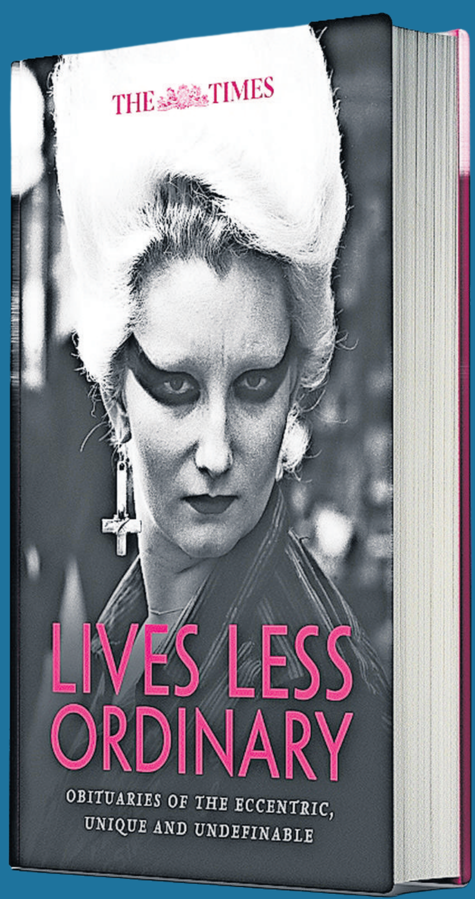
His Majesty toured the workshop, meeting young people on the apprenticeship programmes and viewed their work.

Later the Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP (Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury) had an audience of The King at Buckingham Palace.

St James's Palace
23rd November, 2022
The Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence this afternoon departed Mount Pleasant Airport, Falkland Islands, for the United Kingdom.

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Births, Marriages and Deaths

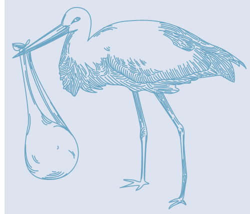
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I LED them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them. Hosea 11.4 (NRSV)

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Births

BIELSKA CHOW on 12th October 2022 to Angela Chow and Zofia Bielska, a daughter, Maya Victoria.

Forthcoming Marriages

MR E. A. DAWSON AND MISS R. G. COOK
The engagement is announced between Eric, son of Mr and Mrs Jeremy and Wijke Dawson of Ballakillowey, Isle of Man, and Rosemary, daughter of Mr and Mrs John and Elizabeth Cook of Crapstone, Devon.

MR I. RAMANI AND MISS L. E. A. FULLER
The engagement is announced between Iman, younger son of Dr Ali Rahmani and Dr Pari Farzim, and Lauren, daughter of Mr Adam Fuller and Nancy Taylor.

Deaths

CROSS Gp Capt William Michael (Mike), aged 80, husband of Diana, father of Will and Alitia, grandfather and great-grandfather, died peacefully in hospital on 9th November 2022. Funeral 28th November at 2.30pm at Grantham Crematorium. Further details from Phillips Funeral Service, Ruskington. 01526 832279.

GORDON-DEAN (KEVILLE)
Anne died peacefully on 11th November 2022. Adored wife, mother and grandmother. Previously married to Bob until his death in 2007, Anne married David in 2013 and leaves him and her children Louise, Mark and Sophie. There will be a private cremation followed by a service of thanksgiving on Thursday 8th December at 11.15am at St Jude's Church, Englefield Green TW20 0BZ. No flowers please. Donations if desired to Robbie's Rehab, Southampton Hospitals Charity no. 1051543.

GEE Philip Huntly passed away peacefully on 8th November 2022, aged 81. He will be sadly missed by family and friends. A funeral service will be held on Friday 2nd December 2022 at noon at the Garden of England Crematorium, Sheppey Way, Bobbing, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8GZ. Family flowers only, but any donations to be made in memory of Philip will benefit Cancer Research UK and can be made via the following link. https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/philipgee

KHAW KokTee died peacefully on 15th November 2022, aged 67. Wife of Peter Taylor and sister of Chay-Tee, Peng-Tee and Kay-Tee. Very much loved and forever missed. No flowers please. Donations to Stroke Association, Barnardo's and CRUK.

WILLIAMS
Owain Anthony Mervyn, DL, died surrounded by his family on 11th November 2022, aged 67. Adored and adoring husband of 40 years to Bethan, and devoted and cherished father to Elizabeth, Antonia, Harry, Arabella and Archie. Private family funeral. Memorial Mass will be held in Wales in the spring.

YALLOP Olivia Mary Rose, on 19th November 2022 in Belize. Beloved daughter of Mark and Rosemary and adored sister to James. Private funeral. A celebration of her life will take place in the spring.

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Legal Notices

3 HOWARDS SERVICES LTD
(Company Number: 08727335)
Principal Trading Address: c/o 3 Howards Farm Cottages, Stockers Lane, Woking, GU22 9DB
Notice is hereby given that creditors of the Company are required, on or before 18 December 2022, to prove their debts by delivering their proofs (in the format specified in Rule 14.4 of the Insolvency (England and Wales) Rules 2016) to the Joint Liquidators at KRE Corporate Recovery Limited, Unit 8 The Aquarium, 1-7 King Street, Reading, Berks RG1 2AN or info@krecr.co.uk. If so required by notice from the Joint Liquidators, creditors must produce any document or other evidence which the Joint Liquidators consider is necessary to substantiate the whole or any part of a claim. Note: The Directors of the Company have made a declaration of solvency and it is expected that all creditors will be paid in full.
Date of Appointment: 18 November 2022.
Office Holder Details: Rob Keyes and Paul Ellison both of KRE Corporate Recovery Limited, Unit 8, The Aquarium, 1-7 King Street, Reading, Berks, RG1 2AN
For further details contact: The Joint Liquidators, Email: info@krecr.co.uk, Tel: 01189 479090. Alternative contact: Lee Lloyd.
Rob Keyes, Joint Liquidator
21 November 2022

OXFORD TECHNOLOGY 2 VENTURE CAPITAL TRUST PLC
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Registrar of Companies has on [14 November] 2022 registered the Order of the High Court dated 11 November 2022 by which the Court confirmed the reduction in the capital of Oxford Technology 2 Venture Capital Trust Plc by way of the cancellation of the total amount standing to the credit of the share premium account of the Company in the sum of £9,452,274.86 and the total amount standing to credit of the capital redemption reserve of the Company in the sum of £625,973.41, in each case pursuant to the provisions of the Companies Act 2006, together with the statement of capital approved by the Court.

Helios Underwriting plc
Company number 05892671
(the "Company")
Notice of General Meeting
Notice is hereby given that a general meeting of the Company will be held on Tuesday 13 December 2022 at 10:00am (the "General Meeting") in the Drawing Room at the City of London Club, 19 Old Broad Street, London EC2N 1DS. Copies of the Notice of General Meeting, Circular and Form of Proxy are available on the Company's website at https://www.huwplc.com/.

NOTICE TO BRANDON COLLINS
Court ref. no: PIC-PN3015-22
An action has been raised in the All-Scotland Sheriff Personal Injury Court, Edinburgh Sheriff Court by Jane Headridge, Pursuer, calling as a Defender Brandon Collins whose last known address is unknown. If Brandon Collins wishes to defend the action he should immediately contact the sheriff clerk at All-Scotland Sheriff Personal Injury Court, Edinburgh Sheriff Court, 27 Chambers Street Edinburgh EH1 1LB from whom the service copy initial writ may be obtained. If he fails to do so decree may be granted against him.
SIGNED: Jennifer Lee Rowlinson
Jackson Boyd LLP
Centenary House, 69 Wellington Street
Glasgow G2 6HG
Agent for the Pursuer

Law

Bill blasted as a blow to human rights

The justice secretary's proposals have attracted widespread condemnation, writes **Catherine Baksi**

SAMEER AL-DOUMY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



The prime minister has linked the plans with the government's strategy to prevent migrants from crossing the Channel

In his first stint as lord chancellor, Dominic Raab's plans to replace the Human Rights Act with a bill of rights elicited almost universal criticism.

Raab's predecessor as justice secretary, Sir Robert Buckland KC, branded the bill "worse than useless" while the Conservative chairman of the justice committee, Sir Bob Neill, said that it "needlessly undermined" rights for UK citizens. Another government minister reportedly called the proposed reform "a complete mess".

More broadly, critics referred to the bill as the "removal of rights bill", and its shelving was viewed by many as the one positive achievement of Liz Truss's 44 days as prime minister.

Bringing it back after Raab's reappointment has provoked censure, not just from human rights campaigners but also from lawyers and some of the most senior retired judges, as well as groups critical of the Human Rights Act.

The prime minister, Rishi Sunak, linked its resurrection with the government's efforts to stop migrants crossing the Channel.

The bill rips up and replaces the Human Rights Act 1998 — which incorporates and makes the rights contained in the European Convention on Human Rights domestically enforceable — to lessen the influence of the European Court of Human Rights on UK courts.

Under the bill of rights ministers will be able to ignore interim injunctions against the UK government issued by the Strasbourg court. The move is seen as a reaction to an interim injunction this year that grounded the first flight of asylum seekers to Rwanda after a successful legal challenge under the European Convention on Human Rights.

Critics of the bill warned that it was a power grab by the executive that would remove key human rights protections, prevent access to justice and diminish government accountability. They argued that it risked destabilising the UK's devolved settlements and the Good Friday agreement and putting the country in breach of longstanding international legal obligations.

Martha Spurrier, the director of the campaign group Liberty, said that the bill would be "the biggest blow to human rights in the UK in a generation". Without the protections of the Human Rights Act, she argued, the victims of the serial rapist John Worboys would not have been able to challenge police failures to investigate. She added that the legislation allowed the victims of the Hillsborough football stadium disaster to get justice.

Baroness Hale of Richmond, the former president of the Supreme Court, said at an event this month: "This is not a bill of rights bill, but a deprivation of rights bill". She branded much of it as "completely unnecessary" and "window-dressing".

Hale's words followed condemnation by other former senior judges, including Lord Mance, a former deputy president of the Supreme Court, who said that the bill could put the UK in breach of the human rights convention and distort the balance between parliamentary sovereignty and the rule of law.

The former master of the rolls, Lord Dyson, said at a lecture for the law reform group, Justice, that the bill was "not based on compelling evidence" and some of its proposals were "pointless". If enacted, he predicted, "it would risk giving rise to years of uncertainty for little or no gain".

'It would risk giving rise to years of uncertainty for little or no gain'

At the Constitutional and Administrative Law Bar Association annual ecture, the former Court of Appeal judge Sir Peter Gross said the "unwise" bill would not achieve the government's desired aims.

While the government might ignore retired judges, mounting disquiet from the City of London might give it pause for thought. The Law Society, which represents solicitors in England and Wales, warned that City lawyers and their international clients viewed the bill with surprise and horror. The society's vice-president, Nick Emmerson, said that the bill handed "our international competitors a stick with which to beat the reputation of the UK jurisdiction and take business away".

Even the right-of-centre think tank, Policy Exchange, which is critical of the Human Rights Act, opposed the bill, reasoning that "it might compound the problems" with the act.

Past Conservative manifestos promised to "update" the Human Rights Act, but Raab's bill goes further. His ideas were revealed in his 2009 book, *The Assault on Liberty: What Went Wrong with Rights*.

In it, explained Paolo Sandro, a law lecturer at the University of Leeds, Raab combined "potent criticisms of the expansion of state powers" in the name of the war on terror, with a "much less convincing attack" on the so-called rights culture created by judgments from Strasbourg and UK domestic courts under the Human Rights Act.

Adam Wagner, a barrister at Doughty Street chambers, speculated that the bill's resurrection was a condition of Raab's return and anticipated that it would not survive if he departed.

Raab is facing two official complaints over alleged bullying and there have been reports of other inappropriate behaviour. Raab denied the allegations.

He told the House of Commons this week that the bill would have its second reading in parliament shortly and that he anticipated overwhelming support. He told MPs that it would "strengthen quintessentially UK rights like freedom of speech, but also deport more foreign offenders and restore some common sense to our justice system".

Raab later told MPs on the justice committee that the bill would not affect the Good Friday agreement because the UK would remain a party to the European Court of Human Rights and in the European Convention.

He said that in drafting the bill, "we took a middle course; it was the madras on the curry menu; not the korma or the vindaloo".

We must stem attempts to threaten freedom of speech

Pia Sarma
Comment

A UK model anti-Slapp law has this week drawn signatories from the overlapping worlds of journalism and law, including editors from most national newspapers.

Until recently the term Slapp — strategic lawsuit against public participation — meant very little.

For UK lawyers, Slapp was a concept peculiar to US courts, where defendants were desperate to get rid of unmeritorious cases in what is a very litigious jurisdiction.

In January this year, the House of Commons for the first time debated Slapps, which are seen as oppressive litigation to stifle debate, and the need to stem their use.

When Russia invaded Ukraine, the ability of oligarchs to start lawsuits to protect their reputation became lightning rods for the frustration of journalists hoping to bring news to their readers. The campaign to stop such threats to free speech took off and the Ministry of Justice called for evidence on how litigation was being used to thwart legitimate inquiries and publications about serious wrongdoing or raising questions about conduct.

The hallmark of many attempts to protect reputation are threats of legal action against small publishers, campaigning groups and journalists — and the use of expensive lawyers to bring protracted legal claims.

The hoops of bringing a libel action present a deterrent to anyone intending to challenge authority when the burden of proof is on the defendant. But it is often the threat that causes the most damage. A whistleblower attempting to expose wrongdoing finds that no one will publish the story because of the threat of legal action.

In this way wealthy litigants can deter any examination of their conduct. Those in public life with a lot balancing on their reputation can rest in the knowledge that wrongdoing can go unreported as the financial risks of reporting are too high. There is thus a fundamental imbalance between the right to freedom of speech and the right to reputation, which is being enabled by the way in which the procedure around libel law works.

The model law proposes a quick route to prevent interference with acts of public participation, including journalism, whistleblowing and academic research. Interference can come in the guise of court proceedings that have some features of an abuse of process.

Faced with such an attempt, a defendant would be able to apply to a court for the case to be dismissed, triggering a stay of proceedings until the matter is resolved. If the court goes on to dismiss the action, in effect saying it should never have been brought, the defendant can recover their costs.

It is hard not to support this valiant attempt to restore the balance between rich claimants and the campaigning and investigative work of whistleblowers and journalists attempting to expose wrongdoing. But the model law has a long way to go. We cannot have another set of laws, in addition to the present libel laws, which generate early skirmishes in court. Any anti-Slapp law must encourage an examination and focus on the purpose of the intended publication. If it contributes to a matter of general debate they should be allowed to get on with their work. If they get it wrong then the laws we already have will catch them.

What we need to halt is the deluge of chilling attempts to threaten fledgling investigations. Cumbersome court process is not the answer.

Pia Sarma is the editorial legal director for The Times and The Sunday Times

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In conversation
Solicitor-advocate Rachael O'Grady on regulation and the space industry
thetimes.co.uk

Crypto chaos as litigation looms

Jonathan Ames

Days after the collapse of FTX — one of the biggest players in cryptocurrency — another platform faces allegations of intimidation and breach of contract after freezing investors' accounts.

Lawyers acting in a forthcoming claim in the High Court in London against Nexo said that the case was one of the first of its kind in the UK but that "many more" were expected in the near future.

Lined up against Nexo, a "fintech" company founded four years ago and based in the Cayman Islands, are three family members: Owen and Jason Morton, who are brothers, and their cousin, Shane.

The claim centres on allegations that Nexo froze their accounts last year, preventing them from withdrawing, exchanging or converting their assets, which they estimated were valued at about £106 million and included non-Nexo tokens. It is alleged that the accounts were frozen after the Mortons said that they were "alarmed" by Nexo's "lack of transparency around its audit and regulatory status". Owing to those concerns, the brothers claimed, they moved in March 2021 to sell their Nexo tokens and withdraw the entirety of their assets from the platform.

The Mortons told the court in written submissions that soon after moving to shift their assets from the platform, they noticed that unusually low withdrawal limits had been placed on the accounts. The next day their accounts were completely frozen. According to their claim, the Mortons were told that if they wished to withdraw their cryptocurrency, they must sell all their tokens back to Nexo at a significant discount.

The Mortons said they considered that to be a threat that if they did not accept the proposal, Nexo would obstruct withdrawals of their assets, including non-Nexo tokens, which, in their view, would be a breach of contract. Regardless, the Mortons said that they "had no option" and therefore agreed to the sale of their Nexo tokens at a 60 per cent discount to market price.

RAFAEL HENRIQUE/SOPA IMAGES



The "fintech" company Nexo is facing allegations that it froze investors' accounts

Responding to the High Court action, Nexo said that it would be "defending the claim in full" and described the action as having "been brought opportunistically, some time after the events in question took place". The company added that it "had considered the matter closed".

Nexo described the Mortons as "high-net-worth, sophisticated investors with backgrounds in fintech". It said that they used the Nexo platform "to make several sizeable and lucrative transactions", which included "fixed-term arrangements, and the subsequent sale of their Nexo tokens".

According to the company, "inevitably, spot trades of large blocks of crypto assets can involve higher spreads. However, all transactions, including the sale of their Nexo tokens, were completed in good faith, were documented and were accepted as final by the claimants at execution. Having made substantial profits from trading their Nexo tokens, the claimants withdrew all their assets from the Nexo platform and they are not disputing this fact."

Ultimately, the Nexo dispute and the demise of FTX are just two indicators that cryptocurrency is destined to be a hotbed of litigation.

Sam Roberts, a partner at the law firm Cooke Young & Keidan, pointed out that a significant area for potential disputes was "the nature of the relationship between a customer, a crypto exchange and the tokens held by the exchange on the customer's behalf".

Roberts said that "the slick appearance of exchanges" could lure investors into thinking that they were simply the crypto equivalent of a bank. He warned that the terms and conditions "vary widely and they are not regulated in the same way that banks are". He added: "If an exchange is hacked, the outcome for the customer could range from total loss to some loss or even no loss depending on the small print and how the exchange functions under the bonnet".

Louise Abbott, a partner at Keystone Law, said that ministers urgently needed to address the issue of regulation. She said that in the UK, investors were exposed to scams and exchange collapses.

Other experts were hopeful that the FTX saga would be "a watershed moment" that prompted ministers to legislate for tougher regulation. However, Nigel Brahams, a partner at Collyer Bristow, noted that such a move "would require co-ordinated efforts across the G20 countries and beyond". He added that "it seems that governments and regulators lack the capacity to deal with challenges like these on such a global scale".

Ultimately, it may come down to the established international central banks to provide stability. James Levy, a partner at Ashurst, acknowledged that the landscape presented "a very significant international challenge for lawyers, accountants, regulators, technologists and legislators to co-ordinate over measures, which will regularise — and thereby fully legitimise — crypto currency and its trading".

One way through the maze, he argued, was that there was "every prospect of reserve banks issuing their own digital currency. This might prove to be an existential threat to the current iteration of crypto currency — hence the need to stabilise and legitimise."

Until then, expect the High Court to host a series of disputes over a form of currency that has only been around in any meaningful manifestation for little more than a decade.

King's Counsel
Alex Steuart

The Queen's Counsel Official Lawyers' Handbook, Biteback, £14.99



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Lawyer of the week Kelly Darlington

Kelly Darlington, the head of inquests at Farleys Solicitors, acted for the family of Awaab Ishak, two, at the inquest into his death. The coroner concluded that the toddler died on December 21, 2020, of a severe respiratory condition as a result of prolonged exposure to mould in his home. The family lived in a flat owned by Rochdale Boroughwide Housing.

What were the biggest hurdles you had to overcome at this inquest? Ensuring that the family had legal aid funding to be represented at the inquest.

What is the best decision you have taken as a lawyer? Deciding to specialise in inquest work. I quickly learned as a trainee the importance of this work and the difference you can make to the lives of others.

Who do you most admire in the law? Leslie Thomas KC — a formidable lawyer who fights tooth and nail for his clients. His work is instrumental in bringing state bodies to account.



What is the best advice you have received? Not to take things personally. Being a lawyer can be frustrating. No matter how hard you try to get your clients the outcome they deserve, the law can be against you.

What is the funniest thing that has happened in your job? Walking into the glass door entrance to a court full of people in Manchester Civil Justice Centre for a civil claim trial — it wasn't my proudest moment.

What are the best and worst elements of being a lawyer? The best is getting to the truth for bereaved families. Despite the devastating losses, they have the most amazing energy to fight for the truth. On the other side of the coin, it can be frustrating when they feel let down by the process.

What law would you enact? An automatic right to legal aid for bereaved families faced with an inquest. State bodies have automatic access to public funds for expert legal teams and families should too.

What is your favourite book? Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I read it aged 11 and the book inspired me to become a dedicated and passionate lawyer like Atticus Finch.

Linda Tsang
l_tsang@hotmail.com

OUT OF COURT

The cases, the chatter, the chaos: what's really going on in the law

Solicitors to foot hefty bill

This should stick in the craw of solicitors in England and Wales — they are going to have to pay an extra £1.2 million next year so the body that doles out punishment can find a new home.

The Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal is having to up sticks from Ludgate Circus in London after its landlord withdrew the offer of a ten-year lease. The tribunal has secured a two-year extension, but it has told the Legal Services Board that it will need to find new digs by next September so it has a place ready to move into. This means that next year's tribunal budget will rise from about £3.1 million to nearly £4.3 million.

A step towards change

A quarter of legal chiefs at large corporations said that they assess diversity data when deciding which law firms to instruct, researchers revealed this week.

The Thomson Reuters report finding will vindicate those who have been campaigning for City law firms to pay greater attention to the ethnic, sex and socio-economic composition of their recruits. Hillary McNally, who led the research, predicted that within a year "the majority of corporate legal departments will have…initiatives in place".

US firms edge ahead

In a less cheery announcement from Thomson Reuters researchers, another report this week found that growth in demand for law firms in the US outstripped that for those in the UK over the first half of this year.

The researchers found that demand for the services of law firms in the US grew by 1.1 per cent, compared with no change for services of those in the UK.

Expressing emotions

"Men feel a palpable expectation that they should be strong, not display vulnerability and be able to shoulder the burden of personal problems themselves without recourse to others," Wellbeing Republic and LawCare said this week in a report issued to mark International Men's Day, which fell on Saturday. They also said that "working as a lawyer adds additional pressure to this sense of needing to appear perfect".

As any woman trainee solicitor in the City could probably attest, the problem is that men are lacking in "emotional vocabulary", the report said.

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Weather

Today Blustery with cloud and rain spreading eastwards, although mainly dry in the east. Max 13C (55F), min 0C (32F)

Around Britain

Key: b=bright, c=cloud, d=drizzle, pc=partly cloudy du=dull, f=fair, fg=fog, h=hail, m=mist, r=rain, sh=showers, sl=sleet, sn=snow, s=sun, t=thunder *=previous day **=data not available

	Temp C midday yesterday		Rain mm 24 hrs to 5pm yesterday	Sun hr*
Aberdeen	9	C	2.0	0.5
Aberporth	7	R	11.4	0.4
Anglesey	11	C	13.0	2.6
Aviemore	6	R	1.2	0.2
Barnstaple	12	PC	10.0	**
Bedford	11	PC	6.2	**
Belfast	8	PC	10.4	0.0
Birmingham	11	S	6.2	**
Bournemouth	12	S	9.4	4.7
Bridlington	9	C	5.2	**
Bristol	12	PC	8.0	3.9
Camborne	11	SH	10.6	0.0
Cardiff	11	C	10.8	2.4
Edinburgh	7	C	0.6	1.4
Eskdalemuir	7	PC	6.2	4.0
Glasgow	7	PC	6.0	1.2
Hereford	8	R	11.6	**
Herstmonceux	12	S	11.8	**
Ipswich	9	PC	5.0	0.0
Isle of Man	12	PC	7.6	3.7
Isle of Wight	**	**	**	**
Jersey	13	PC	3.2	1.7
Keswick	10	PC	6.2	**
Kinloss	8	C	0.0	1.0
Leeds	8	PC	14.0	**
Lerwick	8	M	11.8	0.0
Leuchars	8	R	3.2	0.7
Lincoln	10	R	6.8	0.0
Liverpool	11	S	3.8	**
London	12	PC	2.4	4.4
Lyneham	10	S	11.0	2.3
Manchester	11	S	7.0	0.1
Margate	11	C	**	**
Milford Haven	12	C	9.2	**
Newcastle	6	D	1.8	**
Nottingham	10	PC	7.0	0.5
Orkney	9	C	1.6	0.1
Oxford	11	PC	5.0	**
Plymouth	12	C	10.2	**
Portland	12	PC	6.8	**
Scilly, St Mary's	13	S	10.8	**
Shoreham	12	PC	6.6	2.4
Shrewsbury	11	PC	4.6	1.0
Snowdonia	8	R	14.2	**
Southend	11	C	3.4	3.7
South Uist	7	R	6.2	**
Stornoway	7	R	7.8	0.2
Tiree	7	R	11.0	2.0
Whitehaven	8	C	13.0	0.7
Wick	9	C	0.4	**
Yeovilton	12	PC	10.4	2.9

The world

All readings local midday yesterday

Alicante	23	PC	Madeira	22	PC
Amsterdam	9	PC	Madrid	15	B
Athens	17	PC	Malaga	22	PC
Auckland	18	B	Mallorca	23	PC
Bahrain	27	PC	Malta	19	PC
Bangkok	31	PC	Melbourne	16	B
Barbados	29	PC	Mexico City	21	PC
Barcelona	18	PC	Miami	29	PC
Beijing	11	S	Milan	13	S
Beirut	22	PC	Mombasa	31	PC
Belgrade	9	B	Montreal	-2	B
Berlin	6	S	Moscow	0	M
Bermuda	21	R	Mumbai	32	S
Bordeaux	14	B	Munich	8	PC
Brussels	10	R	Nairobi	20	B
Bucharest	10	R	Naples	16	PC
Budapest	5	R	New Orleans	13	R
Buenos Aires	22	S	New York	9	PC
Cairo	23	PC	Nice	16	S
Calcutta	27	S	Nicosia	22	B
Canberra	18	PC	Oslo	0	SN
Cape Town	21	B	Paris	9	B
Chicago	11	PC	Perth	25	PC
Copenhagen	7	B	Prague	4	M
Corfu	17	PC	Reykjavik	4	S
Delhi	24	S	Riga	-4	DU
Dubai	30	S	Rio de Janeiro	31	PC
Dublin	8	PC	Riyadh	25	S
Faro	19	PC	Rome	15	S
Florence	9	S	San Francisco	14	B
Frankfurt	10	S	Santiago	31	S
Geneva	7	SH	São Paulo	28	S
Gibraltar	19	R	Seoul	13	S
Helsinki	-3	B	Seychelles	30	PC
Hong Kong	26	PC	Singapore	28	B
Honolulu	29	PC	St Petersburg	-2	SN
Istanbul	19	B	Stockholm	0	B
Jerusalem	25	S	Sydney	25	S
Johannesburg	22	PC	Tel Aviv	25	S
Kuala Lumpur	29	PC	Tenerife	25	PC
Kyiv	**	**	Tokyo	12	R
Lanzarote	24	PC	Vancouver	7	R
Las Palmas	24	PC	Venice	11	S
Lima	18	B	Vienna	5	R
Lisbon	19	B	Warsaw	0	DU
Los Angeles	22	PC	Washington	14	S
Luxor	26	S	Zurich	8	PC

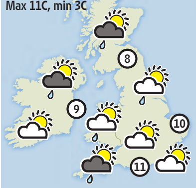
Five days ahead

Generally dry in the southeast but unsettled further north and west with spells of rain

Tomorrow

Most places will have a dry day with sunny spells but the risk of showers in western England, western Wales, Scotland and western Ireland.

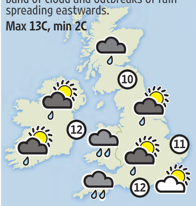
Max 11C, min 3C



Saturday

Dry with sunny spells in eastern England. Blustery elsewhere with a band of cloud and outbreaks of rain spreading eastwards.

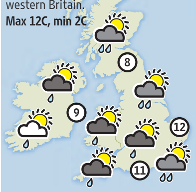
Max 13C, min 2C



Sunday

Rather cloudy with showery rain clearing eastern England to bring a drier afternoon. Sunny spells and a scattering of showers in Ireland and western Britain.

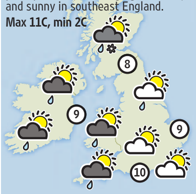
Max 12C, min 2C



Monday

Sunny spells and a scattering of showers over Scotland, northern and western England, Wales and Ireland, perhaps wintry over high ground. Dry and sunny in southeast England.

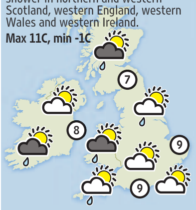
Max 11C, min 2C



Tuesday

Most places will have a dry day with sunny spells but the risk of an isolated shower in northern and western Scotland, western England, western Wales and western Ireland.

Max 11C, min -1C



The Times weather page is provided by Weather**quest**

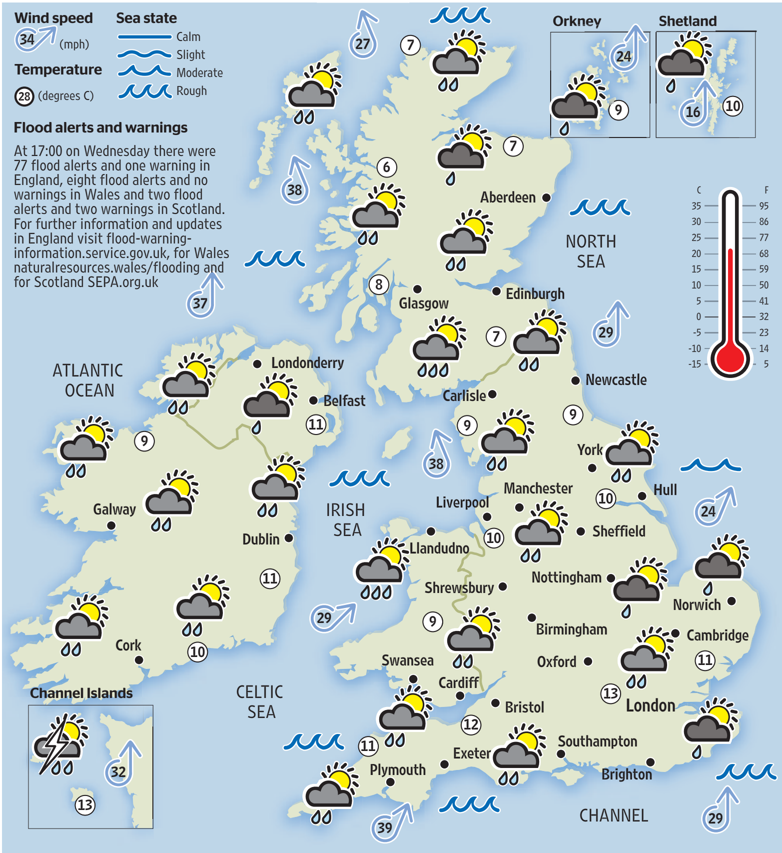
Wind speed 34 (mph)

Temperature 28 (degrees C)

Sea state Calm, Slight, Moderate, Rough

Flood alerts and warnings

At 17:00 on Wednesday there were 77 flood alerts and one warning in England, eight flood alerts and no warnings in Wales and two flood alerts and two warnings in Scotland. For further information and updates in England visit flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk, for Wales naturalresources.wales/flooding and for Scotland SEPA.org.uk

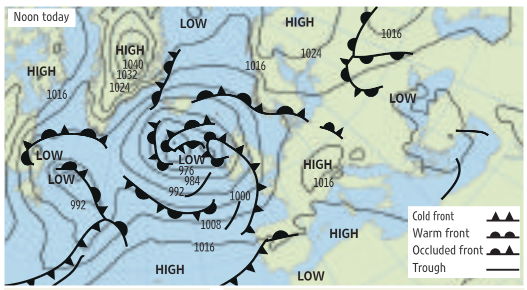


General situation: A band of cloud and showery rain will spread east across Ireland and into Britain, although staying dry in eastern areas until later.
SE Eng, E Anglia, London, E Eng: Most of the day will be dry with sunny spells but cloud increasing during the afternoon to bring rain later. Light increasing to moderate or fresh southerly wind. Maximum 13C (55F), minimum 3C (37F).
Republic of Ireland, N Ireland: Cloud and rain clearing east at first to bring dry and sunny spells before showers spread in from the west later. Fresh to strong southwesterly wind. Maximum 11C (52F), minimum 2C (36F).
N Isles: Showers clearing to bring a mostly dry and sunny day before cloud increases later to bring rain. Fresh to strong southerly wind. Maximum 10C (50F), minimum 9C (48F).
SW Eng, Lake District, SW Scotland, IoM, NW Scotland, Wales, Argyll: Rather cloudy with showery rain, heavy at times, before turning drier and sunny later. Fresh to strong southerly wind, veering southwesterly. Maximum 12C (54F), minimum 2C (36F).
Cen S Eng, NW Eng, Cen Highland, Borders, NE Eng, Midlands, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Moray Firth, NE Scotland, Edinburgh and Dundee, Cen N Eng, Channel Is: Dry with sunny spells at first but cloud increasing to bring rain in the afternoon, heavy and squally at times. Light increasing to fresh or strong southerly wind. Maximum 13C (55F), minimum 0C (32F).

Tides

Tidal predictions. Heights in metres

Today		Ht		Ht
Aberdeen	00:54	4.4	13:18	4.4
Avonmouth	07:05	13.3	19:26	13.3
Belfast	10:48	3.6	23:11	3.7
Cardiff	06:51	12.3	19:12	12.5
Devonport	05:38	5.5	17:59	5.5
Dover	10:41	6.9	23:03	6.8
Dublin	10:06	5.8	22:25	5.8
Falmouth	05:01	5.1	17:22	5.2
Greenock	--:--	--	12:28	3.5
Harwich	11:32	4.1	23:59	4.1
Holyhead	10:07	5.8	22:26	5.8
Hull	05:57	7.6	18:23	7.7
Leith	02:14	5.6	14:35	5.7
Liverpool	10:55	9.5	23:14	9.5
London Bridge	01:26	6.9	13:46	7.2
Lowestoft	09:04	2.6	21:39	2.6
Milford Haven	05:59	7.1	18:19	7.2
Morecambe	11:05	9.5	23:24	9.6
Newhaven	10:53	6.9	23:16	6.8
Newquay	04:50	7.1	17:10	7.2
Oban	05:28	4.0	17:43	4.1
Penzance	04:22	5.6	16:41	5.6
Portsmouth	11:12	4.9	23:32	4.8
Shoreham	10:58	6.4	23:22	6.4
Southampton	10:23	4.7	23:07	4.7
Swansea	06:08	9.5	18:27	9.5
Tees	03:12	5.6	15:37	5.6
Weymouth	06:41	2.2	18:53	2.1



Synoptic situation

A deep area of low pressure to the northwest of Ireland will push a cold front eastwards across Britain and Ireland, bringing outbreaks of squally rain, although eastern areas will stay dry most of the day. Blustery over Ireland with sunny spells and the risk of a few showers later in the day as troughs move in from the Atlantic.

Highs and lows

24hrs to 5pm yesterday

Warmest: Swanage, Dorset, 13.2C
Coldest: Aviemore, -5.9C
Wettest: Ballypatrick Forest, Co Antrim, 21.0mm
Sunniest: Bournemouth, 4.7hrs*

Sun and moon

For Greenwich
Sun rises: 07.32
Sun sets: 16.00
Moon rises: 08.22
Moon sets: 16.04
Third quarter: November 30

Hours of darkness

Aberdeen	16:10-07:41
Belfast	16:39-07:42
Birmingham	16:33-07:16
Cardiff	16:43-07:17
Exeter	16:47-07:15
Glasgow	16:26-07:42
Liverpool	16:33-07:25
London	16:30-07:05
Manchester	16:30-07:22
Newcastle	16:20-07:27
Norwich	16:20-07:04
Penzance	16:58-07:21
Sheffield	16:27-07:18

Weather Eye
Paul Simons



On Tuesday the Italian endurance cyclist Omar Di Felice began an attempt to make the first coast-to-coast bike ride across Antarctica via the South Pole. He plans to cycle more than 1,600km (994 miles), starting from the Hercules Inlet in western Antarctica on the first and most difficult leg to reach the South Pole.

He then intends to change direction towards the McMurdo research station on the coast of continental Antarctica, using an easier route along a compacted ice road built to supply the US base. The whole journey is planned to take some 60 days.

His bike is a specially designed "fat bike", with fat tyres to help grip snow or ice. These bikes have been used by other cyclists in Antarctica, and their experience shows that Di Felice will be forced to walk his bike for much of the journey where the terrain, snow and ice become too difficult for cycling. He is also making the journey solo, using a sledge pulled behind his bike to carry food, clothes, fuel and a tent.

This is a brutal venture, to say the least. Antarctica is the coldest and windiest place on Earth, and Di Felice also faces a deadline of January 20, when his permit to stay in Antarctica expires.

Even though this is the Antarctic summer, temperatures could fall to minus 38C. The first part of the venture is especially tough, with uphill slopes and no track, meaning Di Felice will face a host of possible hazards such as deep powder snow, hard-packed snow, crevasses and sastrugi — snow that has been eroded by the wind into what look like sand dunes but are much harder. The largely featureless landscape also makes staying on track difficult and he will have no supply drops or other assistance.

Di Felice is highlighting the changing climate of Antarctica, and his bike features climate stripes — the iconic visual display designed by Ed Hawkins, a climate scientist at the University of Reading, to show the history of temperature increases over the years.

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Sport

'I'm going to play Jürgen and Lijnders at padel…then I'll pick their brains'

Neal Skupski may be a world No1 doubles star, **Stuart Fraser** writes, but he'll still get up at 4am to watch Liverpool

After finishing this season as the world's best doubles player, Neal Skupski has already set his goals for next year: more grand-slam success, a first Wimbledon men's title and victory with his brother Ken against Jürgen Klopp on the padel court.

"I met the Liverpool assistant manager, Pep Lijnders, at Wimbledon this year and we got chatting," the 32-year-old Liverpudlian says. "They have padel at the training ground in Kirkby, so we have a game set up. Me and Ken are going to go along to training to meet the whole team and then play against Jürgen and Pep. They play every morning supposedly.

"It will be quite cool to talk with Jürgen to see what he thinks of everything. Hopefully we can pick his brain for 10 to 15 minutes over a cup of tea."

Klopp is likely to be impressed by Skupski's dedication on the road to his beloved Liverpool. Whether it involves getting up in the middle of the night or changing his travel plans at the last minute, he will almost always be in front of a screen when his team are in action.

"The only way I miss it is if I'm on the court playing," Skupski says. "After winning the Paris Masters this month I was meant to fly back that night but Liverpool were playing Tottenham. I changed my flight to the Eurostar to watch them on the train. It was quite a struggle with the wi-fi and everything, and it was a bit blurry. But, yeah, in Australia in January I'll be getting up at 4am to watch them play."

Watching football at all hours has not affected his tennis. After starting the year ranked No20 in the doubles ratings, Skupski ended it by joining Andy Murray, Jamie Murray and Joe Salisbury as only the fourth tennis player from Great Britain to become a world No1.

Seven ATP tour titles and a runner-up finish at the US Open are way beyond the expectations that Skupski had this time last year when he agreed to partner the Netherlands' Wesley Koolhof for 2022. He also won a second Wimbledon mixed doubles title with the American, Desirae Krawczyk.

"Me and Wesley were just trying to make the ATP Finals as one of the top eight teams," Skupski says. "But then obviously the goals changed halfway through the year when we knew we were going to be there. It's been an amazing year."

At a time of increased depth in British tennis, Skupski has progressed mostly under the radar to reach No1 at the age of 32. Rather than joining the professional tour in his teenage years, he opted for a place on the American college circuit with Louisiana State University, where he mixed fiercely competitive doubles with a degree in sports administration.

"College was the route for me because I wasn't ready to go professional at 18," Skupski says. "I knew after the first couple of months I wasn't going to make it in singles because of the financial stuff that you'd have to do to get there. We didn't have the money to do that as a family, we didn't have any sponsorship during that time, so doubles was a great option because I basically grew up at my local club playing doubles week in week out. I loved it and always knew I was pretty good at it."

Skupski graduated in 2012 and worked his way up the professional ranks by playing with his big brother Ken — a top-50 player who recently retired at the age of 39 — over the course of the next seven years. When it became apparent that Skupski was destined for greater things in the form of an offer to play with Jamie Murray in the summer of 2019, the siblings decided to part ways.

"It was very tough," Skupski recalls. "I wasn't sure whether to do it or not because Ken had helped bring me up to where I was, but it was him who actually told me to play with Jamie. It wasn't me telling him that I'm leaving him, it it was more him giving me advice as a big brother to go and progress my career. Now he is travelling with me as my coach."

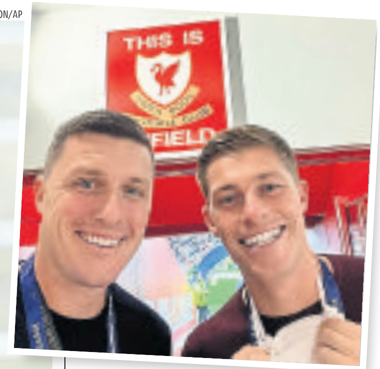
The split paid off. Skupski is now a frontrunner for doubles selection in Britain's Davis Cup qualifier in February, which is presently a hot topic of debate after Dan Evans publicly threatened to quit the team in frustration at never being picked to play doubles. If the captain Leon Smith can resolve the dispute, Skupski and Evans could make for a strong pair after finishing runner-up last year in Monte Carlo and Miami.

"It's fine that Evo believes he should be playing doubles because he's an amazing tennis player," Skupski said. "If he did step on a doubles court in the Davis Cup he would give it his all, and he would be an amazing guy to play with if I was selected to play with him. But we've got a vast number of guys that can play on the doubles court.

"Evo has put it all out there and gotten it off his chest. In a better scenario, it would have been better if he just spoke to Leon maybe and not gone public with it, to see if they could come to an agreement.

"In the Davis Cup there's such an amazing feel around the team. All the group of guys get along so well, and Leon is the catalyst for that. He's the one that makes the guys feel great during that week. It was just an unfortunate situation that happened, but hopefully it gets resolved pretty quick."


JULIA NIKHINSON/AP





Skupski and brother Ken, inset, who are die-hard Liverpool fans, cannot wait to take on Klopp, a padel regular

One of fastest growing sports

Padel is best described as a racket sport that is a hybrid of tennis and squash. Played on a court enclosed by four transparent walls, matches are contested by two pairs of players using the same scoring system as tennis but with stringless bats and lighter balls. Initially popular in Mexico and Spain after its origination in 1969, it is now one of the world's fastest growing sports.

New Zealand opener Guptill available for T20 leagues

Cricket Martin Guptill has become the third experienced player to be released from his New Zealand contract, allowing him to play in T20 leagues around the world.

The veteran batsman joins the bowler Trent Boult, 33, and the all-rounder Colin de Grandhomme, 36, who also asked to have their New Zealand Cricket contracts cancelled.

Boult has joined the Melbourne Stars and De Grandhomme has signed for the Adelaide Strikers in Australia's T20 Big Bash League, which begins next month. Like Boult and De Grandhomme, Guptill, 36, will still be available to play for New Zealand. "Playing for my country has been a massive honour, and I'm grateful to everyone within the Black Caps for their support," he added. "I'm realistic enough to understand the need to consider my options."

Guptill has scored 7,000 runs in 198 one-day internationals and 3,531 runs in 122 T20 internationals.

Croatia beat Spain to reach Davis Cup semis

Tennis Croatia reached the final four of the Davis Cup for a sixth time after a 2-0 win over hosts Spain in Malaga.

Marin Cilic rallied to clinch the winning point for Croatia with a 5-7, 6-3, 7-6 (7-5) victory over Pablo Carreño Busta after Borna Coric had given his side the lead with a 6-4, 7-6 (7-4) win over Roberto Bautista Agut.

Croatia, who were beaten by Russia in last year's Davis Cup final, will play Australia in tomorrow's semi-final.

Sri Lanka fines Karunaratne for World Cup 'misconduct'

Cricket The Sri Lankan bowler Chamika Karunaratne has been fined $5,000 (about £4,145) and given a one-year suspended ban for misconduct during this month's T20 World Cup.

Sri Lanka Cricket did not give details of why the 26-year-old had been sanctioned, beyond saying that he had breached "several clauses" in a player agreement during his time in Australia. A three-member inquiry panel recommended that the board "strongly warn the player to refrain from further violations and to impose a punishment that will not have an impact on his cricketing career", the statement added.

Karunaratne is the second player to be sanctioned by Sri Lanka Cricket for misconduct at the T20 World Cup. Danushka Gunathilaka was suspended this month after he was charged with four counts of sexual assault by Australian authorities. He has not yet entered a plea.

‘I was five and stealing fruit – and getting shot at doing it’

Dillian Whyte tells **Tom Kershaw** about growing up in poverty, being a father at 13 and turning his life around

JULIAN FINNEY/GETTY IMAGES; PETER TARRY FOR THE TIMES



Whyte, below, says that he regrets his subpar performance in his defeat by Fury in April, blaming it on “mental drain”

A few years ago, Dillian Whyte stopped dead in his tracks in the doorway of a Brixton restaurant after recognising a policeman who had arrested him as a teenager. As the officer began walking over, the pain and paranoia that moulded one of Britain’s foremost boxers flooded back in such a torrent that, if only for a moment, he considered turning around and running away.

“Then we started talking and he told me he’d watched my fights, he’d even bought the pay-per-view,” Whyte says. “It was a really beautiful moment, to think you can go from a street kid, this piece of mud, to someone even a policeman can look up to.”

There are other stories like it. Gary Phillips, the former head teacher of Lilian Baylis Technology School in Kennington, described Whyte as arguably the worst pupil he had encountered in 20 years. On more than one occasion he locked himself inside his office and called the police as Whyte brought the grief of a fractured childhood and the grip of gang violence into the classroom.

“I saw him a few years later too,” Whyte, 34, says. “We were walking down Streatham High Road, he was with his daughters and he grabbed their hands so tight. He probably thought I’d be dead or in prison. I think I ended up buying him lunch.”

The brutality of boxing is so often romanticised by its rags-to-riches tales, but few can be taken quite as literally as Whyte’s, who once dressed his own gunshot wound but now sits in the grand living room of a Bedfordshire mansion that previously belonged to Britain’s seventh prime minister. It has been seven months since he faced Tyson Fury at Wembley Stadium, a record-breaking fight for which he earned more than £5 million but one that left Whyte racked with recrimination and regret after being stopped in the sixth round.

“I didn’t perform to my full potential on the night,” Whyte says, referring to the “mental drain” of waiting four years for his chance to fight for a heavyweight title. “But I’m not going to cry about it or let it define me. OK, I lost in the ring, but I’ve fought for life and death. To have even progressed this far is quite miraculous.”

Whyte has recovered from defeats against Anthony Joshua and Alexander Povetkin in the past, and he will begin the comeback trail again when he faces Jermaine Franklin, an unbeaten American heavyweight, on Saturday in London. “I still believe I can become world champion,” Whyte says. “That desire still burns.”

Where the fuel for that fire comes from, though, even if it has been eased by maturity and wealth, remains a “rage” so deep-rooted that Whyte cannot fathom whether it was learnt or innate. “I’d probably end up lying to myself if I tried to explain it,” he says. “I just know I was born and bred in a hostile place without a mother or father really. The things I had to do as a child to survive, some adults would see as impossible.”

Whyte has become a well-known figure over the course of his 31-fight career, but his impoverished upbringing in Jamaica and south London continue to glean horrors so extreme in their cruelty that they make his success all the more extraordinary. Whyte was only two years old when his mother left him with a neighbouring family who siphoned away the money she sent from England to support him.

Dillian Whyte v Jermaine Franklin
Wembley Arena
Saturday, 10pm
TV: DAZN

His earliest memories remain pangs of hunger so sharp that age has never quelled the feeling.

“We had to go into a plantation to steal fruit like bananas and mangos,” he says. “It was private land so the owners actually had a licence to shoot. It didn’t matter if you were five years old, if you weren’t smart, you got hit. There would be bodies in the bushes. One of the first things I got used to in life was losing people.”

Whyte’s father often fell into that category through his absence. “If I wasn’t dead, he thought I was all right,” he says. “He did check in sometimes to discipline me and I’d get my arse whooped. There were a lot of tough lessons that didn’t make sense to me at the time.”



Once, Whyte’s father took him out to sea on a fishing boat, pushed him overboard, and left him there to learn to swim. Another time, “he gave me a baby pig and I raised it like a pet,” Whyte says. “Then, one day, he came and just killed it right in front of me.”

When Whyte was reunited with his mother in Brixton, he struggled to adapt to a different culture and quickly fell in with local gangs. He became a father at only 13 years old — “I was already a mature man because of what I’d been through” — but almost lost his own life in a knife attack around the same time. “I’m not sure which happened first,” he says. “I wasn’t keeping track. That was just my life. I didn’t know about fancy words like trauma or how it’s spelt. I was just thinking about tomorrow, where to get money, how to stay out of prison and not get shot.”

Whyte begins moving glasses around a table to show the winding routes he would take to avoid certain areas on his way home. Sometimes, those precautions still were not strict enough and he was cornered and stabbed again on the upper deck of the 159 bus on his way home from Lilian Baylis. “I don’t know why,” he says. “It was literally like, you live in that postcode, all right.”

As Whyte became further entrenched in a lawless lifestyle, brushes with death became more common and, as he approached his front door in Tulse Hill one evening, a gunman jumped out of a nearby bush and fired a sub-machine gun. The bullets missed on that occasion, but the scars Whyte points to — “my legs, face, hands, they’re everywhere” — prove that was not always the case.

Whyte does not detail his own acts of retribution, but a case against him was substantial enough that he was held in a Bristol prison facing a long-term sentence in his late teens. Ultimately it was not just the prospect of squandering so many years that scared him into turning his life around, but the look on his mother’s face when she visited him. “Seeing her cry, the pain, I knew I had to try something,” he says.

It was hardly an overnight epiphany but, between shifts as a removals worker, a painter and decorator and a builder, there was less time to fall into old traps. When two friends took Whyte to Miguel’s Boxing Gym in Brixton, “it gave me something I never had; a feeling of belonging, achievement, development,” he says. “It was like doing drugs for the first time. I’d be so tired from training, I wasn’t in the streets any more. It took over my life without me even knowing it.”

It is perhaps a cliché but no exaggeration to claim that it saved Whyte’s life, but his boxing career has still been fraught with difficulties and danger. In the early days, he could be found selling tickets on the pavement to keep his fights from falling through with less than an hour to spare. Then, after finally establishing some momentum, he received a two-year suspension for taking a pre-workout supplement that contained a banned stimulant.

It was only in 2015, when Whyte faced his old amateur rival Joshua that he burst from the backstreets into boxing’s mainstream. The entourage that invaded the ring after an ill-tempered first round showed that Whyte’s old world is never far away, but his and Joshua’s paths have remained intertwined by growing stardom and setbacks in the intervening years and a rematch is mooted for next spring. “My mentality is a lot different to his,” Whyte says. “He has been built for the sport, looked after and treated with favouritism. I haven’t. Everything has always been against me and we did it our way.

“I think that’s what killed me about the Fury loss, the people who brought me back from disaster, who supported and protected me…” Whyte stops and bows his head, as if under the weight of letting them down. “I’m not happy or content because the journey doesn’t end here. I feel like crying sometimes when I think about what happened [when I was younger], but my close friends always say to me, ‘Whatever problems you have now are nothing compared to ten years ago.’

“Life’s tough but there is always someone whose story is harder. I go back to my old school when I can. I hope the kids see someone like me, a street rat who’d been completely written off, and it inspires one person to think, ‘You know what, I can change my life too.’ ”

Dominant Brits

Tom Kershaw’s top ten heavyweights in the world

1 Tyson Fury (GB)
2 Oleksandr Usyk (Ukr)
3 Deontay Wilder (US)
4 Anthony Joshua (GB)
5 Joe Joyce (GB)
6 Andy Ruiz (US)
7 Dillian Whyte (GB)
8 Joseph Parker (NZ)
9 Filip Hrgovic (Cro)
10 Frank Sánchez (Cuba)

‘Freakish’ Constitution Hill set for clash with Epatante

Rob Wright Racing Editor

Lambourn trainer Nicky Henderson yesterday described Constitution Hill as “freakish” as he confirmed that he would clash with stablemate Epatante in the grade one Betfair Fighting Fifth Hurdle at Newcastle on Saturday.

Constitution Hill looked exceptional when winning the Supreme Novices’ Hurdle at the Cheltenham Festival last season by 22 lengths. He was a late withdrawal at Ascot last weekend, with Henderson feeling that the ground was too firm for his charge, who is the 5-4 ante-post favourite for the Champion Hurdle back at Cheltenham in March.

The decision to run at Newcastle sets up an unexpected meeting with Epatante, who landed the 2020 Champion Hurdle. Henderson said yesterday: “Michael [Buckley, Constitution Hill’s owner] and I have discussed it ever since the weekend and it was a toss-up between coming for the Fighting Fifth or waiting for the International at Cheltenham [on December 10].

“Michael quite rightly decided he’d like to go to Newcastle. The horse is fit and well and if you wait another fortnight anything can happen. Bear in mind the weather could stay as it has been down south. So there’s the risk Cheltenham could stay as it was for the last meeting and we can’t risk that.

“Perhaps in the beginning we were hoping he and Epatante wouldn’t have to meet at this stage of the season, but the dice have gone that way and we’ve got to let them both run.”

The bookmakers believe that Constitution Hill will have the measure of Epatante, with William Hill making him a red-hot 1-4 favourite ahead of Epatante at 3-1.

There were just six horses left in the Fighting Fifth at yesterday’s entry stage but the final field could be smaller than that, with the Gordon Elliott-trained Pied Piper far from certain to travel from Ireland. “I would say it would be doubtful he would run,” Elliott said.

“We were just waiting to see what turned up, but with those two horses turning up, we might just give it a miss. I would imagine we will go somewhere at Christmas. He has done nothing wrong at all but to throw him in at the deep end at this stage might not be the best idea.”

Langer blames Cummins and ‘cowards’ for forcing him out

Cricket

Justin Langer has blamed “cowards” within the squad for ending his reign as Australia’s head coach.

Langer departed in February after being offered only a six-month contract extension despite a hugely successful period, during which he led his country to the T20 World Cup and two successful defences of the Ashes, including a 4-0 hammering last winter.

By then, there had been a steady stream of rumours and off-the-record reports of dissatisfaction with his man-management and methods. Langer, who has joined the Channel Seven commentary team for Australia’s Test summer, suggested that senior players, including the captain Pat Cummins, were to blame .

“A lot of journalists use the word ‘source’ — I would say, change that word to ‘coward,’” Langer, 52, said. “They’ve either got an axe to grind with someone and they won’t come and say it to your face, or they’re just leaking stuff for their own agenda.

“Everyone was being nice to my face but I was reading about this stuff and half of it, I could not believe that is what was making the papers. I spoke to Pat Cummins. He said to me about five times, ‘This might be brutally honest’. I said, ‘Pat, there is nothing brutal about your feedback. What is brutal is I’m hearing it behind my back through the media or through sources’. People say I’m very intense, but they’re mistaking intensity with honesty.”

Cricket Australia’s chief executive, Nick Hockley, took issue with Langer’s claims. “I am disappointed by Justin’s comments unfairly criticising some of our players,” he said. “The playing group have my full support.”

Lingfield Park

Rob Wright

12.25 Shot Boii
12.55 Advantura
1.30 Guguss Collonges
2.05 Hot Rod Lincoln
2.35 Sheldon (nb)
3.05 Mistral Lady
3.35 Walk In The Wild

Going: soft, good to soft in places on chase course

Sky Sports Racing

12.25 Handicap Hurdle (£4,684: 2m 7f) (8 runners)

1 5P4P- **MR HARP** 257 (D) T Gallagher 9-12-1 **N Brennan (3)**
2 12-P5 **LEGAL RIGHTS** 18 G L Moore 5-11-13 **N F Houlihan (3)**
3 1P4-1 **SHOT BOII** 16 (P,CD) D Pipe 5-11-4 **F Gillard (3)**
4 P5P-5 **GOLD CLERMONT** 16 (H) A Irvine 6-11-1 **C Quinn**
5 25-64 **KILGANER QUEEN** 13 (T) A West 12-10-12 **B Ffrench-Davis (3)**
6 0/23- **BIG PICTURE** 521 (P) O Murphy 10-10-3 **L Stones**
7 6U-00 **OLIVER’S ISLAND** 20 (B,T,D) J Bedi 10-10-2 **A Anderson**
8 000P- **TIS BUT A SCRATCH** 282 Georgie Howell 6-10-2 **Tabitha Worsley**

4-5 Shot Boii, 9-2 Big Picture, 15-2 Kilganer Queen, 8-1 Legal Rights, 10-1 Mr Harp, 20-1 Oliver’s Island, Gold Clermont, 100-1 Tis But A Scratch.

Rob Wright’s choice: Shot Boii has been raised just 4lb for his recent win here **Dangers:** Legal Rights, Big Picture

12.55 Handicap Chase (£4,684: 2m 7f 110yd) (10)

1 535-2 **ECHO WATT** 20 (T,D) R Hobson 8-12-2 **J Best**
2 111-6 **GALTEE MOUNTAIN** 28 P G Murphy 7-12-0 **G Sheehan**
3 P3-40 **NEIL THE LEGEND** 16 K Davis 8-12-0 **Sean O’Briain (7)**
4 6U36- **RED LION LAD** 287 (W,B) D Pipe 6-11-13 **F Gillard (3)**
5 22P-P **UALLRIGHTHARRY** 200 (P) J Best & K Jewell 10-11-13 **M Goldstein**
6 415-1 **COOLVALLA** 20 (P) C Gordon 6-11-9 **T Cannon**
7 2P2-1 **BOBMAHLEY** 41 (D) T Vaughan 7-11-7 **A Johns**
8 -325F **AN MARCACH** 20 (B) Dr R Newland 8-11-5 **C Hammond**
9 1P4P- **CELMA DES BOIS** 249 (W,C) R Rowe 10-11-2 **N F Houlihan (3)**
10 45P2- **ADVANTURA** 255 (B) P Hobbs 5-10-2 **T J O’Brien**

2-1 Coolvalla, 9-2 Bobmahley, 5-1 Echo Watt, 13-2 Advantura, 10-1 Red Lion Lad, 12-1 An Marcach, Galtee Mountain, Celma Des Bois.

Wright choice: Advantura improved for the fitting of blinkers when second at Taunton **Dangers:** Coolvalla, Bobmahley

1.30 Handicap Hurdle (£4,684: 2m 3f 110yd) (15)

1 645-0 **KALPAGA** 30 T Vaughan 5-12-0 **A Johns**
2 3-405 **ISKAR D’AIRY** 17 G L Moore 4-11-12 **C Quinn (5)**
3 5044- **DELGANY MONARCH** 270 R Rowe 7-11-12 **N F Houlihan (3)**
4 30-40 **NAVEGAON GATE** 46 (V) N Twiston-Davies 4-11-11 **S Twiston-Davies**
5 P54-P **THE BIG RED ONE** 36 Seamus Mullins 5-11-11 **D Sansom (3)**
6 233-2 **GUGUSS COLLONGES** 28 R Teal 6-11-10 **D Jacob**
7 43 **BOLBERRY DOWN** 81 J Best & K Jewell 6-11-9 **M Goldstein**
8 2P45- **BRANDISOVA** 225 L Wadham 6-11-6 **Bryony Frost**
9 030-2 **ROGER RAREBIT** 18 T Lacey 5-11-6 **S Sheppard**
10 203-0 **ISSAR D’AIRY** 29 G L Moore 4-11-5 **Jamie Moore**
11 6430- **MY TICKETYBOO** 250 C Gordon 4-11-0 **T Cannon**
12 44-U4 **LAKESIDE LAD** 186 (BF) Seamus Mullins 7-10-8 **M G Nolan**
13 00P-6 **GORCOMBE MOONSHINE** 20 R Walford 5-10-5 **B Carver**
14 005-3 **THE IMPOSTER** 18 (T,V) N Hawke 5-10-4 **T Buckley (3)**
15 /04-P **PERCY’S PRINCE** 9 (P,T) C Hobson 6-10-2 **B Poste**

100-30 Roger Rarebit, 9-2 Guguss Collonges, 13-2 Lakeside Lad, 10-1 Issar D’Airy, The Imposter, 12-1 others.

Wright choice: Guguss Collonges will strip fitter for a recent second at Stratford **Dangers:** Roger Rarebit, The Imposter

Blinkered first time: Kelso 1.20 Nordic Express.

2.05 Novices' Hurdle (£4,901: 2m) (12)

1 **BIRDMAN BOB** A Irvine 5-11-0 **N F Houlihan (3)**
2 315- **BLACK OF THE GLADE** 247 Clive Boultbee-Brooks 5-11-0 **Mr Thomas O’Brien (3)**
3 3F- **DIRHAM EMIRATI** 297 (BF) G L Moore 4-11-0 **C Quinn (5)**
4 2 **EMBOLDEN** 14 C Hobson 5-11-0 **B Poste**
5 50-00 **FLEMEN’S TIPPLE** 16 A Irvine 5-11-0 **J Best**
6 1- **GIVEGA** 550 G L Moore 6-11-0 **Jamie Moore**
7 45-5 **HALONDO** 22 O Murphy 5-11-0 **S Bowen**
8 25 **HIGH GAME ROYAL** 22 P Hobbs 5-11-0 **T J O’Brien**
9 35600 **HOLKHAM HALL** 11 P Henderson 6-11-0 **Sean Houlihan**
10 1-4 **HOT ROD LINCOLN** 22 H Fry 6-11-0 **J J Burke**
11 P **RHUBARB BIKINI** F21 M Attwater 5-11-0 **M Goldstein**
12 442-0 **ROLLING CLOUDS** 22 M Keighley 6-11-0 **S Twiston-Davies**

15-8 Hot Rod Lincoln, 4-1 Dirham Emirati, High Game Royal, 5-1 Givega, 10-1 Halondo, 14-1 Embolden, 20-1 Black Of The Glade, 25-1 others.

Wright choice: Hot Rod Lincoln drops in trip after racing too keenly at Chepstow **Dangers:** High Game Royal, Givega

2.35 Handicap Chase (£12,358: 2m 4f) (12)

1 302-2 **MUCHO MAS** 30 (T) B Pauling 6-12-0 **K Woods**
2 3-31F **SHELDON** 16 Seamus Mullins 6-11-13 **D Sansom (3)**
3 /106- **GOUDHURST STAR** 306 (T) H Fry 6-11-13 **J J Burke**
4 F060- **THOR DE CERISY** 224 M Scudamore 8-11-12 **Luca Morgan (3)**
5 0PF-6 **HENRY GONDOFF** 16 Jonjo O’Neill 7-11-12 **K Brogan**
6 /4FP- **ONEUPMANSHIP** 308 (BF) A Honeyball 7-11-12 **R Dingle**
7 /641- **BURROWS PARK** 216 V Williams 10-11-11 **Miss L M Turner (5)**
8 524-0 **BILL BAXTER** 30 (W) W Greatrex 6-11-11 **J Bowen**
9 210-2 **GOOD LOOK CHARM** 20 A Honeyball 6-11-11 **A Coleman**
10 2234- **BEST TRITION** 257 (W,P,T) O Murphy 7-11-10 **S Bowen**
11 543-6 **REBEL INTENTIONS** 28 (T) E Lavelle 5-11-2 **S Twiston-Davies**
12 55-34 **SEIGNEUR DES AS** 17 M Harris 4-10-11 **T J O’Brien**

100-30 Mucho Mas, 5-1 Sheldon, 6-1 Burrows Park, 15-2 Good Look Charm, 10-1 Best Trition, Bill Baxter, Seigneur Des As, Goudhurst Star, Oneupmanship.

Wright choice: Sheldon was still travelling well when he fell at Bangor **Dangers:** Mucho Mas, Burrows Park

3.05 Maiden Hurdle (£4,901: 2m 3f 110yd) (10)

1 0-300 **BELLA CIAO** 21 M Keighley 5-11-2 **S Bowen**
2 2112- **FELICIE DU MAQUIS** 215 Clive Boultbee-Brooks 7-11-2 **Mr Thomas O’Brien (3)**
3 33/P **HONEST OSCAR** 18 A Irvine 7-11-2 **N F Houlihan (3)**
4 3460 **MAIRE’S DREAM** 11 (H) C Poulton 5-11-2 **Charlie Price (3)**
5 100-6 **MISTRAL NELL** 14 L Wadham 5-11-2 **Bryony Frost**
6 2312- **TIME FOR HOLLIE** 282 (T,BF) K Bailey 6-11-2 **D Bass**
7 1PP-6 **UNCERTAIN TIMES** 200 Miss A N-Smith 7-11-2 **R Dingle**
8 065-P **WALK IN THE STARS** 14 (T) C Hobson 5-11-2 **B Poste**
9 64-4 **JASMIWA** 36 N Twiston-Davies 4-11-1 **S Twiston-Davies**
10 46-3 **MISTRAL LADY** 24 P Hobbs 4-11-1 **T J O’Brien**

6-5 Time For Hollie, 100-30 Mistral Lady, 9-2 Jasmiwa, 13-2 Mistral Nell, 10-1 Felicie Du Maquis, 20-1 Honest Oscar, 25-1 Bella Ciao, 66-1 Maire’s Dream.

Wright choice: Mistral Lady was a promising third on his hurdles debut **Dangers:** Time For Hollie, Walk In The Stars

3.35 Handicap Chase (£4,684: 2m) (7)

1 63-2P **BLACKCAUSEWAY** 17 (T) N Twiston-Davies 6-12-0 **S Twiston-Davies**
2 5P0-1 **WALK IN THE WILD** 16 (C) G L Moore 6-11-8 **Jamie Moore**
3 5P-PP **VALIRANN GOLD** 16 (H,T) Harriet Brown 5-11-1 **Shane Quinlan (5)**
4 022-0 **UBERMAN** 20 (CD) K Davis 8-11-1 **Mr D Kyne (7)**
5 P24-2 **SHAW’S CROSS** 20 P Henderson 10-10-6 **T J O’Brien**
6 6-405 **MASTER BLAZE** 14 (P,T) D Pipe 4-10-6 **C Hammond**
7 33F/0 **CLONDAW ROBIN** 16 (P) A Irvine 9-10-2 **J Best**

5-4 Walk In The Wild, 7-2 Shaw’s Cross, 4-1 Blackcauseway, 7-1 Uberman, 8-1 Master Blaze, 33-1 Clondaw Robin, 66-1 Valirann Gold.

Wright choice: Walk In The Wild won easily here last time and should cope with this drop in trip **Danger:** Uberman

Kelso

Rob Wright

12.48 Eloi Du Puy
1.20 Rockmann
1.55 Lissen To The Lady
2.28 Miss Milano
2.58 Destiny Is All
3.28 Camp Belan

Going: soft **Racing TV**

12.48 Novices' Hurdle (£4,901: 2m) (10)

1 40-2 **CHAPEL GREEN** 26 L Russell 5-11-0 **S Mulqueen**
2 245-2 **CHASE A FORTUNE** 39 C Grant 4-11-0 **Sean Quinlan**
3 2- **CONISTON CLOUDS** 242 N Richards 6-11-0 **D McMenamin**
4 25-3 **ELOI DU PUY** 31 (H) N Alexander 4-11-0 **B Lynn (5)**
5 P5-1 **GAMETIME** 208 D McCain 5-11-0 **B Hughes**
6 53-3 **NINETOFIVE** 33 (T) A M Thomson 5-11-0 **R Mania**
7 50-5 **SO MANY ROADS** 25 D Whillans 5-11-0 **Craig Nichol**
8 0 **SOMETHING GOLDEN** 19 (H) I Jardine 6-11-0 **Miss Alisa McClung (7)**
9 RFP-2 **ARCANDY** 20 W Coltherd 6-10-7 **S Coltherd**
10 2-26 **REVE DE NIAMH** 19 I Jardine 5-10-7 **C O’Farrell**

11-4 Chapel Green, 7-2 Gametime, 4-1 Coniston Clouds, 11-2 Arcandy, 8-1 Eloi Du Puy, 10-1 Chase A Fortune, 12-1 Ninetofive, 16-1 Reve De Niamh.

1.20 Handicap Hurdle (£3,431: 2m 5f) (12)

1 063-P **KALAHARRY** 26 Ewan Whillans 10-12-2 **D Johnston (7)**
2 20430 **TIMETOTALK** 27 Chris McSharry 6-11-12 **Craig Nichol**
3 /5500 **PASSNOTALEGEND** 153 (W) S Waugh 9-11-11 **W Shanahan (7)**
4 160-0 **DUTY CALLS** 33 S Forster 9-11-11 **L Murtagh (3)**
5 23652 **BESTIARIUS** 19 G Boanas 10-11-7 **T Midgley (5)**
6 2P-0S **AZOF DES MOTTES** 19 (T) G Bewley 5-11-6 **J Bewley (3)**
7 -0540 **CORAL BLUE** 8 D Bourke 7-11-0 **R Chapman**
8 3034- **ASKGARMOR** 226 T Davidson 10-10-8 **H Reed**
9 060/2 **ROCKMANN** 35 M Walford 7-10-8 **J Hamilton**
10 0P-0 **BEBSIDE BANTER** 39 C Grant 5-10-7 **Sean Quinlan**
11 F6006 **HALCYON DREAMS** 31 (T) K Scott 7-10-2 **Emma Smith-Chaston (5)**
12 0P0-0 **NORDIC EXPRESS** 15 (B) I Duncan 5-10-2 **C O’Farrell**

5-2 Rockmann, 4-1 Bestiarius, 6-1 Timetotalk, 13-2 Azof Des Mottes, 8-1 Askgarmor, 10-1 Coral Blue, 12-1 Kalaharry, 14-1 Duty Calls.

1.55 Handicap Hurdle (£4,520: 3m 2f) (12)

1 4-32P **DELUXE RANGE** 42 (P,C) A M Thomson 7-12-0 **R Mania**
2 022P- **FIRTH OF FORTH** 260 R Dobbin 6-11-13 **Craig Nichol**
3 642P- **GLITTERING LOVE** 216 (B) N Richards 10-11-9 **B Hughes**
4 -2011 **HOGANVILLE** 31 G Bewley 5-11-7 **C Rabbitt (7)**
5 632F- **LADY BOWES** 268 (P) J Moffatt 8-11-6 **Charlotte Jones (3)**
6 3P-F0 **TOUGH OUT** 27 Mrs J Stephen 5-11-6 **J Hamilton**
7 110-0 **YOU SOME BOY** 19 R Menzies 7-11-1 **N Moscrop**
8 221-0 **SHOESHINE BOY** 33 D Whillans 6-11-0 **H Brooke**
9 31-46 **LISSEN TO THE LADY** 179 (P,C) S Forster 8-11-0 **Miss J Walton (5)**
10 -24P0 **JESSIEMAC** 20 (P,T,CD) I Duncan 8-10-13 **D R Fox**
11 045-0 **FORTCANYON** 19 S Forster 6-10-12 **T Willmott (3)**
12 60-34 **TARTAN COOKIE** 137 (W,P) Ewan Whillans 6-10-10 **D McMenamin**

100-30 Hoganville, 5-1 Lady Bowes, 15-2 Lissen To The Lady, Shoeshine Boy, Glittering Love, Tartan Cookie, 10-1 You Some Boy, 12-1 others.

2.28 Handicap Hurdle (£4,520: 2m 7f) (7)

1 32-61 **MISS MILANO** 27 N Richards 7-12-0 **C Rabbitt (7)**
2 /202- **JEN’S GEORGIE** 262 S Drinkwater 7-11-10 **R T Dunne**
3 P-360 **MAURA JEANNE** 166 I Duncan 5-11-8 **C O’Farrell**
4 430-3 **WITHOUT CONVICTION** 47 (BF) L Russell 7-11-7 **A Doyle (5)**
5 5-540 **PASTURE BEACH** 53 (W,T) L Russell 5-10-10 **Doubtful**
6 -660P **YOUR PLACE** 8 (V) L Russell 6-10-6 **D R Fox**
7 604-6 **SEPTEMBER DAISY** 31 N Alexander 7-10-2 **D McMenamin**

7-4 Miss Milano, 5-2 Jen’s Georgie, 7-2 Without Conviction, 8-1 Maura Jeanne, 12-1 Your Place, September Daisy.

2.58 Handicap Chase (£4,684: 2m 7f) (5)

1 /R3-1 **BRAYHILL** 19 (CD) J Ewart 7-12-0 **B Hughes**
2 111-6 **STOLEN MONEY** 15 D Whillans 7-11-10 **Craig Nichol**
3 243-1 **TFOU** 31 N Richards 6-11-10 **Sean Quinlan**
4 134-U **HALF TRACK** 25 N Alexander 6-11-8 **D McMenamin**
5 F11-2 **DESTINY IS ALL** 26 L Russell 8-11-2 **D R Fox**

15-8 Tfou, 2-1 Brayhill, 3-1 Destiny Is All, 13-2 Half Track, 20-1 Stolen Money.

3.28 Handicap Chase (£4,684: 3m 2f) (5)

1 2U0-2 **CAMP BELAN** 31 L Russell 6-12-0 **P W Wadge (10)**
2 -0122 **LOUGHERMORE** 153 (D) S Waugh 8-11-7 **W Shanahan (3)**
3 U1-32 **GIPSY LEE ROSE** 20 (T,V) N Alexander 8-11-6 **B Lynn (3)**
4 222/6 **KING OF FASHION** 31 (P,T) I Duncan 12-10-9 **T Willmott**
5 060-4 **MAID OF HOUXTY** 31 D Whillans 7-10-6 **L Dobb (5)**

11-8 Camp Belan, 9-4 Gipsy Lee Rose, 10-3 Loughermore, 7-1 Maid Of Houxty, 50-1 King Of Fashion.

Taunton

Rob Wright

12.40 Timeforatune
1.10 Can You Call
1.45 Let’s Have Another
2.20 Potters Venture
2.50 Love Actually (nap)
3.20 Opening Bid
3.50 No No Tonic

Going: good **Racing TV**

12.40 NH Novices' Hurdle (Div I: £4,901: 2m 104yd) (12)

1 10-41 **TIMEFORATUNE** 10 (P,D) P Nicholls 6-11-7 **H Cobden**
2 4403- **BLUEBLOOD** 370 M Gillard 6-11-0 **T Gillard (3)**
3 02-50 **CHAMPAGNE GIFT** 22 D J Jeffreys 6-11-0 **T Bellamy**
4 6 **IMPERIAL MEASURE** 30 E Williams 4-11-0 **A Wedge**
5 0-54 **INSPECTOR LYNLEY** 19 N Mulholland 5-11-0 **R McLernon**
6 230-4 **MAMOON STAR** 33 F O’Brien 4-11-0 **P Brennan**
7 16-45 **ROYAL SAM** 14 M Harris 5-11-0 **M Bastyan**
8 0- **TALIMAR PEARL** 270 (BF) Joe Tizzard 4-11-0 **B J Powell**
9 54 **VIA DANTE** 172 (H) D Pipe 5-11-0 **D Noonan**
10 0/60 **WILLIAM OF YORK** 8 D Skelton 6-11-0 **H Skelton**
11 00 **BASHFUL KATE** 10 D Pipe 5-10-7 **P Armson (3)**
12 0143 **OOH BETTY** 14 (T) Ben Clarke 4-10-7 **B R Jones**

4-6 Timeforatune, 11-4 Mamoon Star, 10-1 Ooh Betty, 14-1 William Of York, 20-1 Talimar Pearl, Via Dante, Royal Sam, 25-1 Imperial Measure.

1.10 NH Novices' Hurdle (Div II: £4,901: 2m 104yd) (11)

1 -22U1 **AMERICAN SNIPER** 22 (D) D Pipe 4-11-7 **T Scudamore**
2 0 **A DEFINITE GETAWAY** 24 B Pauling 4-11-0 **N De Boinville**
3 0P- **CALL ME TLALOK** 240 (W,T) K Burke 7-11-0 **H Kimber (5)**
4 5F31- **CAN YOU CALL** 283 (T,D) E Williams 7-11-0 **A Wedge**
5 0 **DARK DUOMO** 30 (T) P Hobbs 4-11-0 **B R Jones**
6 65-00 **FAME AND FUN** 8 P Nicholls 5-11-0 **H Cobden**
7 46FU- **INSTANT GAMBLER** 248 Alexandra Dunn 6-11-0 **R McLernon**
8 24-0 **I SHUT THAT D’OR** 28 (H) Joe Tizzard 4-11-0 **B J Powell**
9 4-0 **TEDWIN HILLS** 23 E Lavelle 5-11-0 **T Bellamy**
10 P1-00 **YEOMEN WARDER** 8 D Skelton 5-11-0 **H Skelton**
11 056-U **LADY AMY** 10 (H) Ella Pickard 5-10-7 **D Noonan**

6-5 Can You Call, 11-8 American Sniper, 12-1 I Shut That D’or, 16-1 Tedwin Hills, 20-1 Fame And Fun, Dark Duomo, A Definite Getaway, 25-1 Yeomen Warder.

1.45 Handicap Hurdle (£5,119: 3m) (6)

1 11-01 **JET OF MAGIC** 9 (P) P Nicholls 6-12-7(7ex) **Mr Fred Gordon (7)**
2 32-11 **I SPY A DIVA** 14 (C) K Bailey 5-12-2 **K Lenihan (7)**
3 /24-4 **BUMPY JOHNSON** 32 (P,T) D Pipe 6-12-0 **T Scudamore**
4 01-51 **LET’S HAVE ANOTHER** 40 (P) O Murphy 6-12-0 **F Gregory**
5 4-135 **NICKELSONTHEDIME** 28 (P,T) K Woollacott 8-11-10 **Mr J Newman (5)**
6 3221F **MAROOCHI** 40 (BF) K Burke 5-10-4 **H Kimber (5)**

15-8 Jet Of Magic, 11-4 I Spy A Diva, 5-1 Maroochi, 6-1 Let’s Have Another, 7-1 Bumpy Johnson, 12-1 Nickelsonthedime.

2.20 Handicap Chase (£5,991: 2m 7f) (8)

1 145-0 **TIP TOP CAT** 17 F O’Brien 7-12-2 **L Harrison (3)**
2 21111 **HUELGOAT** 21 (T) P Nicholls 5-12-0 **H Cobden**
3 34-13 **MINELLA BUSTER** 20 E Lavelle 6-12-0 **T Bellamy**
4 2/04- **ENEMENEMYNEMO** 355 D J Jeffreys 7-11-10 **M Kendrick**
5 53-P1 **POTTERS VENTURE** 40 K Burke 8-11-4 **H Kimber (5)**
6 25P-2 **INVESTMENT MANAGER** 32 (P) Joe Tizzard 6-11-4 **B J Powell**
7 3P-05 **HELIOS ALLEN** 18 Mrs J Williams 5-11-4 **D Noonan**
8 343-4 **KAYF HERNANDO** 30 (P,T) D Skelton 6-11-2 **H Skelton**

2-1 Huelgoat, 7-2 Minella Buster, 5-1 Potters Venture, 7-1 Investment Manager, 8-1 Kayf Hernando, 12-1 Helios Allen, Enemenemynemo, 16-1 Tip Top Cat.

2.50 Handicap Hurdle (£6,753: 2m 3f) (12)

1 332P- **QUOI DE NEUF** 222 (T) E Williams 8-12-0 **A Wedge**
2 22-11 **ITSO FURY** 21 (T) Jonjo O’Neill 5-11-11 **Jonjo O’Neill Jr**
3 1112P **KAUTO THE KING** 28 (T) Joe Tizzard 8-11-11 **B J Powell**
4 1-322 **NOTRE PARI** 93 (P,D) O Murphy 8-11-10 **W T Kennedy**
5 24241 **WEE WILLIE NAIL** 55 R Harper 4-11-6 **J Brace (7)**
6 43-51 **PASVOLSKY** 38 (P) C Gordon 7-11-5 **Mr Fred Gordon (7)**
7 -P10P **TRANSLINK** 24 (P,T) N Mulholland 7-11-3 **R McLernon**
8 24516 **MULBERRY HILL** 20 (T) F O’Brien 6-11-2 **P Brennan**
9 31-22 **IRISH HILL** 11 (BF,C) P Nicholls 4-11-2 **H Cobden**
10 /6P-2 **PETRASTAR** 35 (T) D J Jeffreys 7-11-1 **T Bellamy**
11 1421/ **NOBEL JOSHUA** 728 (P,C) D Pipe 6-10-13 **T Scudamore**
12 53-61 **LOVE ACTUALLY** 14 (CD) K Burke 6-10-3 **H Kimber (5)**

3-1 Irish Hill, 4-1 Itso Fury, 8-1 Nobel Joshua, 10-1 Notre Pari, Love Actually, Kauto The King, Wee Willie Nail, Quoi De Neuf.

3.20 Handicap Chase (£4,629: 2m 2f) (11)

1 6-022 **OPENING BID** 23 (H,BF) C Down 7-12-2 **J M Davies**
2 00-33 **STANLEY PINCOMBE** 24 C Gordon 5-11-13 **Mr Fred Gordon (7)**
3 24032 **DINDIN** 11 (B,T) D Pipe 9-11-11 **P Armson (3)**
4 3-525 **GO AS YOU PLEASE** 58 (P) P Webber 9-11-9 **R McLernon**
5 060-3 **CALL ME FREDDIE** 21 Mrs R Ford 7-11-9 **Jonjo O’Neill Jr**
6 244-3 **LAZY SUNDAY** 28 (T) R Mitford-Slade 8-11-7 **C Deutsch**
7 U6-20 **FOLLY GATE** 18 (T) Mrs J Williams 7-11-6 **Mr P Summers (7)**
8 0P00- **ESTATE ITALIANA** 275 (T) Alexandra Dunn 5-10-7 **B R Jones**
9 53-26 **GAELIC THUNDER** 24 (P,T) Chris Honour 7-10-2 **D Noonan**
10 052U0 **AGENT SAONOIS** 27 (P,T) N Mulholland 6-10-2 **T Scudamore**
11 0/3-U **MILADYGRACE** 21 M Keighley 7-10-2 **A Wedge**

4-1 Opening Bid, 9-2 Miladygrace, 6-1 Lazy Sunday, 7-1 Folly Gate, Dindin, 15-2 Stanley Pincombe, 10-1 Gaelic Thunder, Go As You Please.

3.50 Handicap Hurdle (£4,302: 2m 3f) (16)

1 5-341 **NO NO TONIC** 7 (B,T) M Gillard 8-12-4(7ex) **T Gillard (3)**
2 2246- **MOVEIT LIKE MINNIE** 245 (T,BF) N Twiston-Davies 5-12-1 **F Lambert (7)**
3 U02 **COLONY QUEEN** 16 (BF) D Pipe 6-11-12 **T Scudamore**
4 430-5 **LINE OF DESCENT** F132 W Greatrex 4-11-11 **B J Powell**
5 05-24 **LAND OF MY DELIGHT** 52 D J Jeffreys 6-11-11 **T Bellamy**
6 404-5 **CALLISTO’S KING** 28 (T) D Skelton 5-11-10 **H Skelton**
7 060/5 **UTHER PENDRAGON** 7 (P) J S Moore 7-11-7 **W T Kennedy**
8 540-0 **AFTER THE FOX** 12 (D) Mrs J Williams 7-11-7 **D Noonan**
9 04-P6 **HARDE FASHION** 32 (P) Daniel Bourne 6-11-6 **J Brace (7)**
10 0-500 **WISE GLORY** 16 (T) G Harris 5-11-2 **C Ring (3)**
11 6-432 **KARAKORAM** 22 (P,T,BF,CD) G Harris 7-11-1 **J A Anderson (7)**
12 513-2 **MICKYH** 196 (P,T,BF,D) N Mulholland 6-10-12 **R McLernon**
13 50-31 **COBBS CORNER** 41 N Gifford 6-10-5 **J M Davies**
14 P06- **BROADOAK** 242 (W) Mrs F M Shaw 7-10-5 **B Godfrey (3)**
15 -P4PP **GOOD GREEF** 18 (H) R Luke 7-10-2 **R Patrick**
16 -0P64 **PRESGRAVE** 59 (P,T) J Frost 5-10-2 **A Cheleda (5)**

9-2 No No Tonic, 11-2 Cobbs Corner, 13-2 Mickyh, 7-1 Moveit Like Minnie, Colony Queen, Karakoram, 8-1 Callisto’s King, 10-1 Line Of Descent.

Results

Football

World Cup: Group E

Germany (1) **1** **Japan** (0) **2**
Gündogan 33 (pen) — Doan 75, Asano 83
42,608
(at Khalifa International Stadium, Al Rayyan)

Spain (3) **7** **Costa Rica** (0) **0**
Olmo 11, Asensio 21, Torres 31 (pen), 54, Páez Gavira 74, Soler 90, Morata 90+2 — 40,013
(at Al Thumama Stadium, Doha)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Spain	1	1	0	0	7	0	7	**3**
Japan	1	1	0	0	2	1	1	**3**
Germany	1	0	0	1	1	2	-1	**0**
Costa Rica	1	0	0	1	0	7	-7	**0**

Group F

Belgium (1) **1** **Canada** (0) **0**
Batshuayi 44 — 40,432
(at Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium, Al Rayyan)

Morocco (0) **0** **Croatia** (0) **0**
59,407
(at Al Bayt Stadium, Al Khor)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Belgium	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	**3**
Croatia	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Morocco	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	**1**
Canada	1	0	0	1	0	1	-1	**0**

Papa John’s EFL Trophy: Second round: North Port Vale 2 Barnsley 1. **South** Colchester 1 Bristol Rovers 2.

Women’s Champions League: Group A Chelsea 2 Real Madrid 0.

Today’s fixtures: World Cup: Group G Brazil v Serbia (7.0, at Lusail Iconic Stadium); Switzerland v Cameroon (10am, at Al Janoub Stadium). **Group H** Portugal v Ghana (4.0, at Stadium 974); Uruguay v South Korea (1.0, at Education City Stadium).

Women’s Champions League: Group C Juventus v Arsenal (8.0).

Women’s Super League Reading v Liverpool (7.0).

Tennis

Davis Cup finals

Martín Carpena Arena, Málaga: Quarter-final: Croatia bt Spain 2-0 (Croatia names first: B Ćoric bt R Bautista Agut 6-4, 7-6 (7-4); M Cilic bt P Carreño Busta 5-7, 6-4, 7-6 (7-5); N Mektic and M Pavic v Carreño Busta and M Granollers did not play).

Yesterday’s racing results

Hereford

Going: soft (heavy in places)

12.50 (2m 3f 147yd hdle) 1, **Theatre Man** (D Bass, 11-4); 2, New Found Fame (9-2); 3, Bannow Bay Boy (28-1). 13 ran. 12l, 3l. R Bandey.

1.20 (2m 3f 147yd hdle) 1, **Zestful Hope** (Paul O’Brien, 11-4); 2, Walkinthewoods (5-2 fav); 3, William Ewart (3-1). 8 ran. NR: Cornicello. 6l, 4½l. C E Longsdon.

1.50 (2m 8yd ch) 1, **Greenrock Abbey** (R Patrick, 2-1 fav); 2, School For Scandal (9-1); 3, Eros (5-2). 7 ran. NR: God Knows Why, Legendary Rhythm, Starvoski. Nk, 19l. Kerry Lee.

2.20 (2m 53yd hdle) 1, **Beau Balko** (H Cobden, 1-2 fav); 2, Atlanta Brave (11-4); 3, Thankyourluckystar (11-2). 9 ran. NR: Ardenay. ¾l, 11l. P F Nicholls.

2.50 (3m 1f 44yd ch) 1, **Party Fuzz** (D Bass, 18-1); 2, Walking The Walk (11-2); 3, Atakan (5-1). 12 ran. NR: Loud As Lions. 1½l, 11l. K C Bailey.

3.20 (2m 3f 147yd hdle) 1, **Phillapa Sue** (Kielan Woods, 10-1); 2, Merry Mistress (7-2); 3, Bonnie Bresil (9-4 fav). 8 ran. NR: Midnight Ginger, Sashenka. 7l, 3l. F O’Brien.

3.50 (2m 53yd Flat) 1, **Ioupy Collonges** (Ben Bromley, 5-2); 2, Goonhilly (28-1); 3, Classic King (15-2). 10 ran. NR: Hey Mister Dj, Hurrican Dream, Undercover Lover. Nk, 7½l. P F Nicholls.

Placepot: £43.90. Quadpot: £9.40.

Wetherby

Going: heavy (soft in places)

1.05 (1m 7f 36yd ch) 1, **Parliament Hill** (S Bowen, 9-2); 2, Hidor De Bersy (7-2); 3, Escapeandevade (7-4 fav). 6 ran. 6l, 1¼l. O Murphy.

1.35 (2m hdle) 1, **Spartan Army** (Adrian Heskin, 5-6 fav); 2, Wholeofthemoon (15-8); 3, Wakey Wakey (4-1). 5 ran. NR: Robin Goodfellow. 6l, 7l. A King.

2.10 (3m 45yd ch) 1, **French Paradoxe** (G Sheehan, 4-1); 2, Southern Sam (11-4); 3, Contemplatemyfaith (11-2). 5 ran. NR: Tango Boy. 3¼l, 7l. O Signy.

2.40 (2m hdle) 1, **Pembroke** (Harry Skelton, 11-8); 2, Magic Wave (11-10 fav); 3, Lightening Company (22-1). 8 ran. NR: American Sniper, Calcutta Dream, Prairie Wolf. 6½l, 19l. D Skelton.

3.10 (1m 7f 36yd ch) 1, **No Risk Des Flos** (S Bowen, 11-2); 2, Knickerbockerglory (Evens fav); 3, Joke Dancer (14-1). 6 ran. 7l, 9l. O Murphy.

3.40 (2m Flat) 1, **Lunar Discovery** (Charlotte Jones, 9-2); 2, Mercian Omen (9-2); 3, For Gina (9-2). 9 ran. NR: Another Park, Dysart Enos, Nulli Secundus. 1½l, 9½l. James Moffatt.

Jackpot: £14,796.60 — part won. Pool of £5,473.57 carried forward to Kelso today.

Placepot: £33.20. Quadpot: £8.00.

Ahmed's chance to be youngest Englishman to play Test cricket

John Westerby

Given the mistrustful view of leg spin that traditionally permeates the game in this country, the addition of Rehan Ahmed to England's Test squad yesterday is the latest sign that a new and bolder path is being forged under the leadership of captain Ben Stokes, and head coach Brendon McCullum.

Ahmed turned 18 in August, and if he makes his debut in the three-match Test series next month, he would become the youngest ever man to player a Test for England, beating Brian Close's record of 18 years and 149 days, when he made his debut against New Zealand in 1949.

He has played only three first-class matches for Leicestershire, in which he has taken nine wickets. But his talent as a leg-spin bowling all-rounder has been clear for all to see. He was originally due to spend time with England in Pakistan as a net bowler to gain experience, but he has impressed sufficiently with England Lions in UAE in recent weeks to earn promotion to the full Test squad.

"We know he's not the finished article and has raw potential," McCullum said. "But Ben [Stokes], myself and the rest of the coaches like how he approaches his game. The experience of being part of the squad in Pakistan will be hugely beneficial for him, and he will add to the make-up of our squad."

In recent years, England have been unusually blessed to be able to call on a world-class leg-spinner in Adil Rashid, the sort of talent that has struggled to survive in county cricket. Wrist spin is the most difficult of the cricketing crafts to master and a combination of English conditions and conservatism have historically seen finger-spinners thrive more readily.

But Rashid has underpinned the twin World Cup successes enjoyed by England's white-ball teams and, although his performances in 19 Tests were mixed, he has been a hugely significant figure. The Yorkshireman is now 34 and the question has been asked quietly for some time how long we would have to wait to see another leggie of his quality emerge, even though the Twenty20 age is encouraging more wrist-spinners to chance their arms. Now Ahmed is being backed to fill that gap when Rashid retires and, as Stokes and McCullum fervently hope, to maintain a dual focus on red-ball and white-ball formats.

Stokes, indeed, was given the earliest indication of Ahmed's promise seven years ago, when an 11-year-old leg-spinner from Nottingham, with a sharply spun and well disguised googly, was invited to bowl at England's batsmen in the nets before a Test match. It was the wrong 'un, on that day, that made the greatest impression on England's left handers, and he picked up two significant scalps. "I bowled Ben Stokes a couple of leg spinners and then a googly and he snicked off," Ahmed has said. "He wasn't the happiest, so I didn't celebrate, I just took the ball and walked back to my mark. When I snicked [off] Alastair Cook, he wasn't as bothered."

Breaking new ground

Rehan Ahmed will become England's youngest men's Test player if he makes his debut on next month's tour of Pakistan. He will be 18 years and 109 days when the first Test starts next Thursday

Player	Age
Brian Close (v New Zealand, 1949)	18y 149d
Jack Crawford (v South Africa, 1906)	19y 32d
Denis Compton (v New Zealand, 1937)	19y 83d
Ben Hollioake (v Australia, 1997)	19y 269d
Haseeb Hameed (v India, 2016)	19y 320d

After starting out in Nottinghamshire's junior teams, he moved to Leicestershire from Under-15 onwards and was playing for their second team at 16. This year, at 17, he was one of the outstanding performers as England reached the final of the Under-19 World Cup, his four for 41 turning the semi-final against Afghanistan.

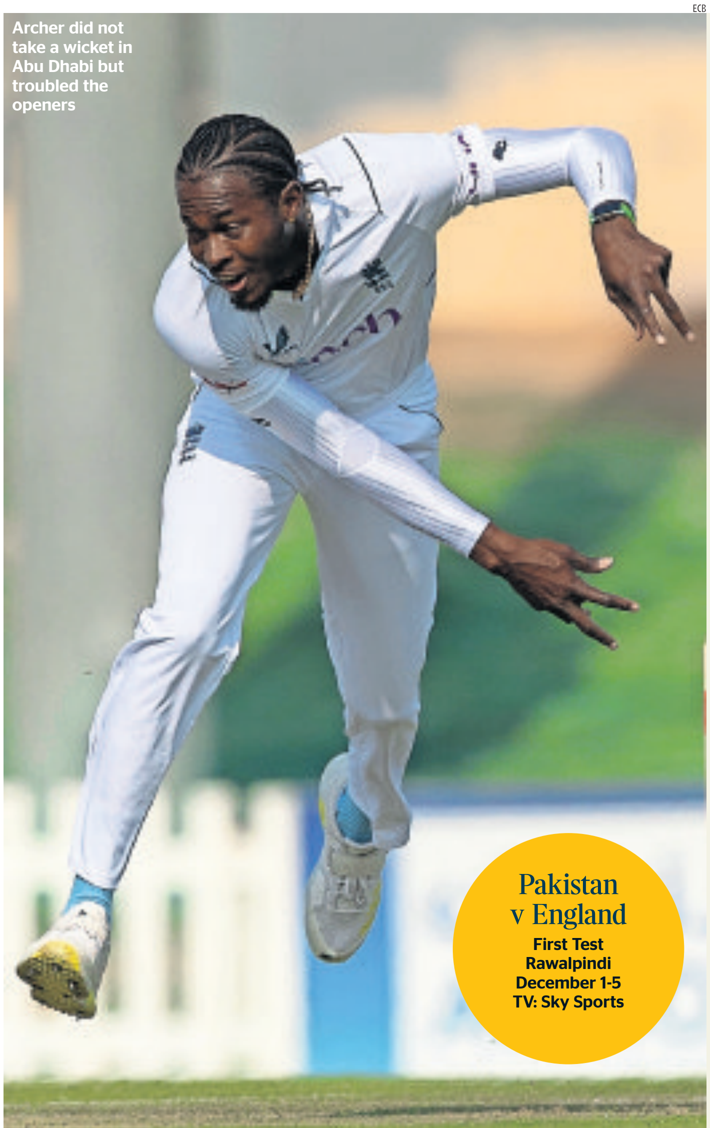
Beyond the sheer talent, there are a couple of notable traits that Ahmed shares with Rashid. Both their families hail originally from Pakistan, with Ahmed's father moving from Mirpur to Nottingham to work as a taxi driver, and the family links will make his trip to Pakistan all the more special. There is no shortage of talent in the family, as Ahmed's older brother, Raheem, a left-arm seamer, has played for Leicestershire's second XI. More remarkable still, his younger brother, Farhan, played for Nottinghamshire's second team this summer aged only 14.

The other trait Ahmed shares with Rashid should prove valuable in years to come. Along with his leg-spin, he is a highly accomplished batsman, as he proved in the final round of County Championship matches in September, taking five wickets and making a century against Derbyshire in only his third first-class game.

So many leg-spinners have found themselves surplus to requirements in county cricket when the pitches have not been in their favour, leading to long periods out of the team, especially in the disjointed county schedule of recent seasons. On their return to the team, there can then be an expectation to perform match-winning miracles. As Rashid found in his early days, the ability to contribute significant lower-order runs can help a young leg spinner to hang onto his place in the side. Ahmed seems to have all the necessary qualities, and Stokes and McCullum clearly feel he is made of the right stuff.



Ahmed, at 18, has played in only three first-class matches



ECB

Archer did not take a wicket in Abu Dhabi but troubled the openers

Pakistan v England
First Test
Rawalpindi
December 1-5
TV: Sky Sports

Archer back – and hitting team-mates on the head

Jofra Archer returned to cricket after a 20-month absence through injury by hitting his team-mate Zak Crawley on the helmet with a lively bouncer (Elizabeth Ammon writes).

The fast bowler, who has not played since March 2021 because of an elbow injury, which required surgery, and a lower-back stress fracture, featured for England Lions against the Test team in a warm-up match in Abu Dhabi.

Archer, 27, bowled two spells — one of five overs and another of four — on the first day of the game, which is serving as preparation for the Pakistan tour. He did not take a wicket but troubled the openers Crawley and Ben Duckett, hitting the former on the head with a short ball.

"He always bowls quick, Jof," Crawley said. "He obviously got me in the first over and it won't be the last time I'm sure. He's a top bowler and it's good to see him back in the field. There's a speed gun up there and they said he was bowling 90 [mph]. They say you can add 3mph to that so he's bowling good pace."

Archer is due to make his competitive comeback in the new South African T20 league, which starts on January 10, playing for MI Cape Town. He could then be in line for an international return when England play South Africa in a three-match one-day international series in late January.

Archer is not in the squad for England's forthcoming three-Test tour to Pakistan and England are keen to manage him carefully, to ensure he is fully fit for next summer's Ashes. He may not be risked for the Test tour to New Zealand in February, in order to protect his fitness.

After being hit on the helmet by Archer, Crawley was cleared to play having been assessed for concussion, and he went on to make 96 from 89 balls, with 15 fours and a six, before being run out by Archer. His opening partner, Duckett, made 28 and is tipped to be Crawley's partner for the first Test in Rawalpindi, which starts on December 1.

The other opening batsman in the touring party, Keaton Jennings, came in at No 5 in place of Ben Stokes, the captain, who is not taking part in this game. He made 40 from 52 balls.

Ollie Pope, captaining England in the absence of Stokes, made a superb 146 batting at No 3, which included 25 boundaries. With a middle-order spot up for grabs due to the absence of the injured Jonny Bairstow, Liam Livingstone batted at No 6, making 36, while the uncapped Surrey all-rounder Will Jacks scored a breezy fifty in a flowing partnership with Ben Foakes, who finished the day unbeaten on 48.

Sciver returns – but not as vice-captain

Elizabeth Ammon

England's star allrounder Nat Sciver has opted not to return to her vice-captaincy role for the tour to West Indies next month.

The 30-year-old has not played international cricket since captaining England at the Commonwealth Games in July, standing in for the injured Heather Knight. Sciver took part in the Hundred for Trent Rockets but then pulled out of the rest of England's summer fixtures, citing the need to look after her mental health.

Sciver has been named in England's squad for the eight-match tour to the Caribbean and is thought to be keen on a leadership role again in the future but for now, she wants to concentrate on her own form. The tour — featuring three one-day internationals, starting on December 4, and five T20s — will be the first assignment for the new head coach Jon Lewis, whom has taken over from Lisa Keightley. Lewis previously coached Sussex and England Under-19 and was most recently an assistant coach for England's senior men's squad.

"To lead any England team is something you should feel incredibly proud of, and I am relishing the challenge" Lewis, 47, said. "The ceiling is incredibly high for this group of players. Not only have we got exciting young players but there's a really good group of senior players as well.

"There is a great balance of skill, ages and backgrounds in the squad. My job is to help the players release their potential and there is nothing, I believe, this group can't achieve."

England are a team in transition. Some of the stalwarts who were part of the 2017 World Cup-winning team have already retired and others are in the autumn of their careers. Lewis will need to continue to integrate emerging talent such as Alice Capsey, the 18-year-old all-rounder, and Issy Wong, the 20-year-old fast bowler.

Lewis has a big 12 months ahead, with a T20 World Cup in South Africa in March and the Ashes in the summer which will run alongside the men's version and has already attracted record ticket sales.

Having come from the men's team working under Brendon McCullum, Lewis, whose captain Knight is fit again to lead the team in the West Indies, has urged his side to follow their lead.

"I want the team to play with the same style or brand that really makes people want to come and watch great, entertaining cricket," he said.

‘People are dying…where is the help?’

Kevin Sinfield says £50m the government pledged to help find a cure for MND has not been seen, writes **Ross Heppenstall**

ISAAC PARKIN/PA





Sinfield, left, completed seven ultra marathons last week, and, above, with Burrow, his former Leeds team-mate who had MND diagnosed in 2019

Kevin Sinfield has raised more than £7 million since Rob Burrow, his great friend and former team-mate, had motor neurone disease diagnosed — but only recently has he come to appreciate the transformative impact of his efforts.

Sinfield, the former Leeds Rhinos captain, last week ran seven ultra-marathons in seven days, taking him from Edinburgh to Manchester and culminating in his arrival at half-time of the men’s Rugby League World Cup final at Old Trafford.

The 42-year-old was given a thunderous reception at Old Trafford, where he skippered Leeds to seven Grand Final wins alongside Burrow, but it was earlier in the day that the magnitude of his fundraising for MND charities truly hit home.

“As we ran through Halifax, I got pulled over by a family, and the dad had MND,” said Sinfield, who took time out of his schedule as Leicester Tigers’ defence coach to complete the gruelling challenge.

“He had not left his house for five years, but came out to see us because he wanted to show how much what we were doing meant to him. I shared a few words with this guy, he had tears in his eyes, and that’s the difference we were able to make last week.

“To come out of his house for the first time in five years was pretty remarkable and shows how powerful the MND community is when it comes together.

“People with MND are massively challenged every day and they understand that tomorrow is always a bit worse than today.

“But they are wonderful people, they are fighting and, given the work that has been done since Rob was diagnosed, suddenly now the MND community don’t have to hide themselves away or feel ashamed any longer. Hopefully now, more and more people will feel comfortable about facing people and standing together.”

Burrow, 40, had MND diagnosed in December 2019 and Sinfield completed epic challenges in 2020 and 2021 which raised more than £5 million before his latest escapades took him past the £7 million mark, prompting further calls for a knighthood for a man already known at Headingley as “Sir Kev”.

Doddie Weir, the former Scotland rugby union lock; Ed Slater, the ex-Gloucester player; and Stephen Darby, the former Bradford City defender, have also had MND diagnosed in recent years. The government announced a commitment of £50 million investment into MND research in November last year, but the funding has yet to materialise.

“MND is not incurable — it’s just been under-funded,” Sinfield said. “We’re trying to get the funds in place to find a cure, but also, in the short term, to help families who are challenged by the disease and need adjustments making to their houses and counselling for their family.

“The government pledged £50 million about 12 months ago, but there has not been enough action and still no money has changed hands. I cannot see a valid reason why that is because people are dying, losing time and having their lives ripped apart.

“The sooner some of that £50 million is passed over, the sooner some smarter minds than mine in science and research can get on with trying to find a cure or a drug that slows this disease down.”

Sinfield quit as director of rugby at Leeds in August last year to cross codes and join Steve Borthwick’s coaching staff at Leicester, who were crowned Gallagher Premiership champions last season.

He still lives in his native Oldham, as he did throughout his long playing career with the Rhinos, but spends one or two nights in Leicester.

“I came here for the challenge — I wanted to be out of my comfort zone and try something new,” Sinfield, who had grown unhappy at Headingley and wanted a more hands-on role, said.

“This is a great environment in which to learn and get better. Steve’s the most driven person I’ve ever met and a fantastic coach. The set-up here is one that has improved me as a person and I’ve loved being here.”

Sinfield is coy about the prospect of following in the footsteps of numerous ex-league greats such as Shaun Edwards and Andy Farrell by one day coaching in union at international level.

“I think Shaun’s far ahead of where I’m at,” he said. “He’s probably been doing it 20 years now along with someone like Andy Farrell, whereas I started out fresh last year.

“I never have any plans for the future. If something doesn’t feel right, I’ll stop doing it and I’ll go and take on a different challenge. I’m quite happy where I am at the minute and just trying to get better every day.”

The inaugural Rob Burrow Leeds Marathon will take place on May 14, starting and finishing at Headingley, with Sinfield weighing up other potential fundraising challenges.

“We’ve done three big challenges now and we’ve managed to raise over £7 million, garner a lot support, and raise so much awareness of motor neurone disease,” he said.

“I’m conscious that I’ve got a big responsibility to the MND community now and to continue trying to help and fundraise. In what shape or guise that looks like next, I’m not quite sure just yet.”

The day after his completing his epic challenge, Sinfield, still physically and emotionally exhausted, turned on his laptop to begin preparations for Sunday’s Premiership visit of London Irish. “Emotionally and spiritually, I’m in a really good place,” he said.

To donate, visit justgiving.com/fundraising/sinfield-7-in-7

Sir Kev’s feats of endurance

7 marathons in 7 days
In late 2020, Kevin Sinfield ran seven marathons in seven days, raising £2.7 million for motor neurone disease charities after the diagnosis of former Leeds Rhinos team-mate Rob Burrow in 2019.

Leicester to Leeds in 24 hours
Sinfield completed the Extra Mile Challenge, running 101 miles in 24 hours in 2021. He raised £1 million.

Seven ultra-marathons
Last week, Sinfield ran seven ultra-marathons in seven days, raising £1.35 million.

Cheika turns to Southgate for advice

Rugby union
Ross Heppenstall

Michael Cheika will continue to tap into England manager Gareth Southgate’s knowledge and experience before next year’s Rugby World Cup but claims Liverpool’s Jürgen Klopp is peerless in the world of elite coaches.

Cheika, who coached Lebanon at the Rugbly League World Cup and guided Argentina to a rugby union Test match victory over England at Twickenham this month, counts Southgate among his network of contacts. The pair bonded after meeting at a coaching conference in America and Cheika plans to catch up with him after England’s World Cup campaign.

“I met Gareth at a Leaders in Sport summit over in the US and there were about 10 to 12 coaches from different sports there,” the Argentina head coach said. “We went and watched the Super Bowl and shared some time together talking about different things.

“Gareth was clear in what he already knew and what he wanted to know in order to make England better. After his World Cup experience, I’d definitely love to catch up with him and see how he found it. He’s a good fella so it would be fantastic to see him succeed. I’ll definitely look to pick his brains ahead of the Rugby World Cup next year.”

Klopp, though, is a man Cheika sees as a standard-bearer for coaches globally because of his success in returning Liverpool to the summit of domestic and European football.

Despite the club’s struggles this season, Cheika said: “Klopp took a club with a huge history and tradition, which brings a huge responsibility as well, and turned their fortunes very much in the right direction.

“I know Liverpool have faltered a bit this season but Klopp has pretty much had them firing in all competitions over the past four or five years.”

Cheika also said he was unable to defend Rassie Erasmus, South Africa’s director of rugby, who has again been in trouble with World Rugby for social media posts about referees.

“I don’t want to be a hypocrite because I’ve had my problems in the past, but I wouldn’t have done any of that stuff,” Cheika said. “I don’t have social media so I can’t do it anyway.”

Hooper to miss Wales Test with concussion

Michael Hooper, the Australia flanker, has been ruled out of the Wallabies’ Autumn Nations Series clash against Wales on Saturday.

Hooper, Australia’s former captain who has won 121 caps, presented with concussion symptoms after Australia’s 13-10 defeat by Ireland last weekend.

The Wallabies said that 31-year-old Hooper would return home on Thursday.

He is the latest player to be sidelined during a punishing European tour in which Australia have suffered successive defeats against France, Italy and Ireland.

A number of his colleagues had already been ruled out of the Wales encounter in Cardiff, including centre Hunter Paisami, scrum-half Nic White and prop Taniela Tupou.

O’Gara handed ten-week ban over referee criticism

Ronan O’Gara, the La Rochelle head coach, has been suspended for ten weeks for “harming the best interests of rugby”, the French rugby union league has said.

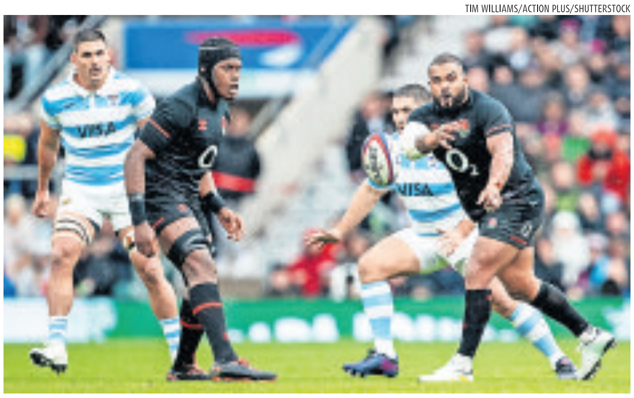
O’Gara had been cited for remarks criticising the refereeing and the organisation of France’s Top 14. The league (LNR) did not specify when the offence occurred but the only match the former Ireland fly half had coached since completing a six-week ban for abusing a referee was against Brive on November 5.

O’Gara, for whom this is a fourth suspension in a year, was also fined €15,000 with a further €5,000 suspended. If the latest ban stands, he will be out until January 30, ruling him out of six Top 14 matches and all four Champions Cup group games.

Best in the world? Sinckler needs to out-scrum Boks

Alex Lowe
Rugby Correspondent





TIM WILLIAMS/ACTION PLUS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Despite his scrum talents, Sinckler has always considered himself a playmaker

The Gallagher Premiership season was seconds old when Ellis Genge came charging on to a short pass from Kyle Sinckler. He shrugged off two Bath defenders, dummied a pass back to Sinckler and powered to the line for the first of two tries on his return to Bristol Bears. "I was saying that all week to Sincks, 'Hit me on that tip line and I will run it under the sticks,'" Genge said.

When the pair combined for a similar try against Gloucester, Ugo Monye referred to the prop stars on the BBC's *Rugby Union Weekly* podcast as the best fly half and inside centre combination in the Premiership. That would have been music to Sinckler's ears.

Despite being obsessed with scrummaging, which will be his most important job against South Africa on Saturday, the England tight-head prop has always considered himself a playmaker at heart. "I remember when he [Sinckler] was at Harlequins he would push Marcus [Smith] aside and try and call the plays," Joe Marler, his former club colleague and mentor, said. "I remember we lost to Agen a couple of seasons ago. The scrum hadn't gone well, the attack hadn't gone well; nothing had gone well.

"The following day we had a meeting and Guzzy [Paul Gustard, the head of rugby at the time] said, 'Right everyone get into your groups; attack group over here, defence group there and set-piece forwards over here.' So we all move to the groups and I'm looking around and Sinck is over in the attack group.

"Guzzy has looked around the room and lost his nut. Bear in mind, Sinck had had his pants pulled down in the scrum and rather than sitting down and saying, 'This is what we need to work on', he's over there going, 'Yeah I think we need to do a bit more of this, run a few more of those, be more off-the-cuff'. Guzzy is like, 'This is ridiculous. You are my tight-head prop.'

"That is his mindset. He wants to do his job but he has got an ability and a vision in the game to contribute in that way too. He has started to develop a mindset where he doesn't need the headlines. He is happier doing the hard yards and the deft touches."

The Sinckler-Genge combination could be broken up this week with Eddie Jones, the head coach, considering a front row reshuffle, with Mako Vunipola and Jamie George coming into the starting side. That would mean Genge and Luke Cowan-Dickie being held back to combat South Africa's so-called "Bomb Squad" with a second-half injection of ferocity, energy and intensity.

Although England would lose the raw power of Genge's presence in the first half, Vunipola's contributions were critical to England rallying from 19 points down to draw 25-25 with New Zealand. "It adds an extra dimension to our attack," George said of his dextrous front-row colleagues, who are central to England's attacking vision.

Martin Gleeson, the England attack coach, wants his forwards to isolate defenders and split the line like Genge and Sinckler do so well in combination; he wants Smith and Owen Farrell to have multiple passing options all attacking the line.

England have delivered that only in patches and know they must be braver after a poor first half against the All Blacks. They improved markedly in the second when Smith began running the show but without being able to convert their chances. But when all seemed lost, England scored three tries in ten minutes to draw the game.

"The scoreboard freed us up to play and we needed to show more courage from the start," George said. "We can't be like that again. We know how big the test is this week. We need to make sure we're fully aware of what 'going at a team' looks like. We know that we are able to play a certain way when we want to — and that has given us confidence."

England v South Africa
Twickenham, Saturday 5.30pm
TV: Amazon Prime

That said, England's selection decisions are centred to a great extent on the set piece, other than a consideration for Henry Slade to start. They were disappointed with the scrum and maul against New Zealand and will reinforce the lineout by selecting a third specialist jumper in the back row.

Jones released Jack Willis from the squad and has essentially retained five locks in a 26-man training squad, all of whom could be involved, with Maro Itoje and Alex Coles options at blind-side flanker.

"I know they were frustrated but that is fuel for the fire," George said. "The way we scrummed and mauled is not the England standard. We're hurting from our performance at the weekend and we want to make sure we get things right." Sinckler demanded more scrum practice in training this week, particularly around the accuracy of England's engagement, which was messy against New Zealand and got them on the wrong side of Mathieu Raynal, the referee.

Matt Proudfoot, the forwards coach, has sent two batches of clips to World Rugby seeking clarification and he raised the issue of the engagement at his meeting with Angus Gardner, who will take charge of the Springboks game, yesterday. "Like in any argument there is my way, your way and the right way. We just want to get to the right way," Proudfoot said.

The previous day, Sinckler had been instructed by Proudfoot to bring some spice to the session; to make it spiky and competitive. "The challenge for us is less technical and more of a mindset challenge," the coach said. "The All Blacks are a crafty side. They try and fracture you. The Springboks have a big heavy engagement. It's a battle of intent and will and it's about all eight of us, everyone connected.

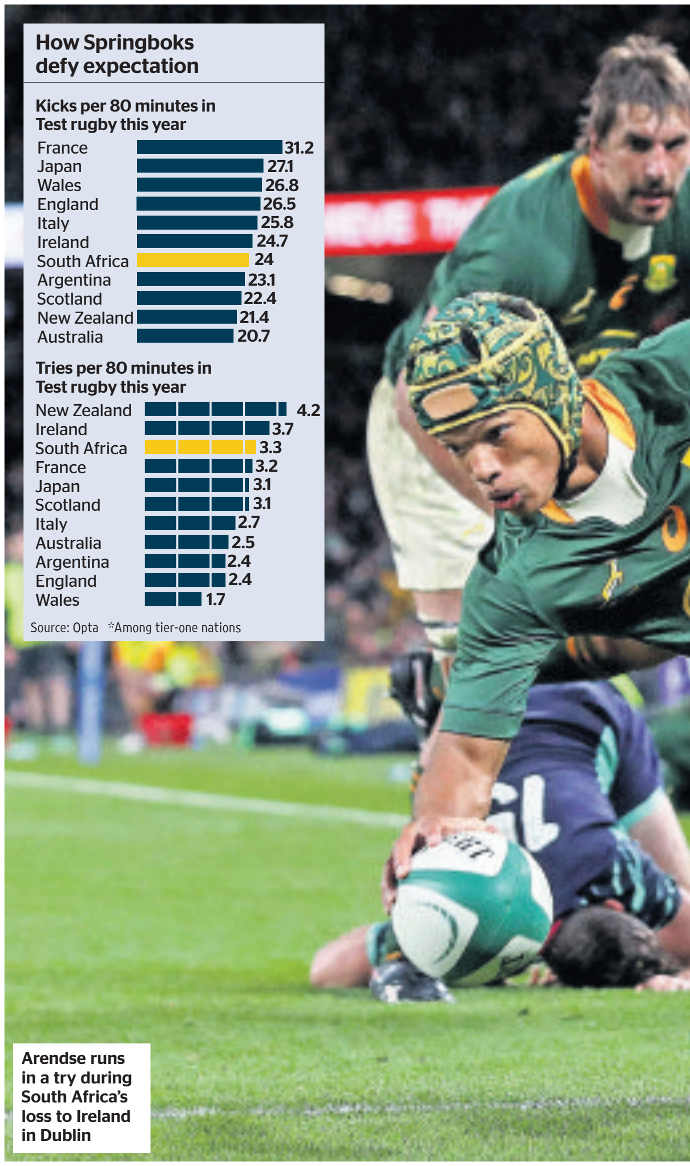
"England is power, passion, tradition — those are the things you'd want to see replicated in the pack. The team takes on the personality of the supporter. That's what you want to associate yourself with. If you look at what English rugby stood for, long before I arrived, those are the traditions that I am trying to preserve because that's the DNA of English rugby."

Sinckler went on the 2014 England tour to New Zealand after a breakthrough season with Harlequins, only months after being out on loan with Ealing. Genge was fast-tracked in similar fashion on to England's 2016 tour to Australia and he has been a long-term project for Jones.

Whether he wears No1 or No17, the 27-year-old is now an England vice-captain and last Sunday night he was selected in World Rugby's team of the year ahead of, among others, Cyril Baille and Steven Kitshoff.

"I get goosebumps when I think about the changes in him from being this rough bloke," Jones said. "At one stage he was hard to control and now he's a leader within the team. He's got consistency and effort, all the hallmarks of a world-class player. When he's leading you forward, people follow him. And Sincks at his best is the best tight-head in the world."

The Springboks on Saturday will provide the acid test.



How Springboks defy expectation

Kicks per 80 minutes in Test rugby this year

France	31.2
Japan	27.1
Wales	26.8
England	26.5
Italy	25.8
Ireland	24.7
South Africa	24
Argentina	23.1
Scotland	22.4
New Zealand	21.4
Australia	20.7

Tries per 80 minutes in Test rugby this year

New Zealand	4.2
Ireland	3.7
South Africa	3.3
France	3.2
Japan	3.1
Scotland	3.1
Italy	2.7
Australia	2.5
Argentina	2.4
England	2.4
Wales	1.7

Source: Opta *Among tier-one nations

Arendse runs in a try during South Africa's loss to Ireland in Dublin

South Africa are not boring - it's official

The world champions say they do not receive enough credit for their attacking, passing game, writes **Will Kelleher**

Ask rugby watchers which international team has kicked the most times per match — and gained the most metres with the boot — this year and almost all of them would reply: South Africa.

Wrong. The correct answers are, in fact, France (for kicks in play) and Argentina (for metres gained), with the Springboks a long way down on both metrics among top-tier nations.

This may come as a surprise to those who see South Africa as a team who, primarily, like to hoof the leather off the ball. Furthermore, only New Zealand (4.2) and Ireland (3.7) have scored more tries per game on average in 2022 than the Springboks (3.3). When it comes to points per match, South Africa (28.6) are beaten solely by France (29.8) and the All Blacks (32.3).

No wonder Jacques Nienaber, and many of his players, feel as if the rugby world disrespects his side.

"We can't control the narrative that gets put out there that we're boring — we don't attack, we just kick, we just tackle," Nienaber, the South Africa head coach, said in the lead up to Saturday's date with England at Twickenham.

South Africa have a variety of playing styles, and have hugely expanded their repertoire since last year, when British & Irish Lions fans bemoaned their limited, pressure-first game.

This year, compared to 2021, they have nearly doubled their amount of line breaks (2.5 to 4.8 per game), they pass the ball far more often (49 per cent of the time, compared to 44 in 2021) and kick it far less (24 per match against 30.2 last year).

"It's a rudimentary mindset people have," Bryan Habana, the former Springboks wing, says of criticism of their style of play.

"I look at the 2019 World Cup, and Makazole Mapimpi became the first Springbok to score a try in a World Cup final. Then that was followed by Cheslin Kolbe scoring an incredible try. Winning 32-12 in a final of the

PAUL FAITH/AFP/GETTY



World Cup [against England] is pretty impressive. Post-1999 that's the biggest World Cup victory ever. I don't think they always get the correct amount of credit."

So far in the autumn, South Africa have lost narrowly against Ireland (19-16) and France (30-26), before hammering Italy 63-21 last Saturday.

"We beat Italy by [scoring] 60 points, which is pretty impressive as a week before they'd just beaten Australia," Habana says. "Hopefully they can continue to prove the doubters wrong.

"Against the French they played a brilliant, attacking brand of rugby where they kicked much less than them, and didn't really get credit for that. They do have the ability to play brilliantly with the likes of Kurt-Lee Arendse, Kolbe, Mapimpi — phenomenal tryscorers — with Willie le Roux orchestrating with Manie Libbok, who has played just two Test matches, and Damian Willemse."

This view is shared inside the camp. Lukhanyo Am, the injured centre who was up for world player of the year, said: "We're quite a balanced team and at times show we can play an exciting game plan. Other times we can slow things down, with a physical game plan.

"It's just a matter of finding the balance. It's not that we're not able or capable of doing it. We've shown it, proven it."

Of course, they do have a mighty pack. Even Am is fearful of them. "If I was on the other side facing our forward pack and someone like Eben Etzebeth, Bongi Mbonambi or Malcolm Marx I would be frightened," he said with a laugh.

But Nienaber knows that his team have the ability to play different ways. Look, he said, at how they shut out Wales in the 2019 semi-final, winning a kick-centric game 19-16, and then how they tore England to ribbons a week later in the final.

"All teams want to apply pressure and you can do it through the defence, ball in hand or kicking game," Nienaber said last week. "It depends where you feel you can apply pressure. We felt that we can apply pressure with ball in hand against Italy."

They certainly did, running in nine tries in Genoa. One may think it was *only* Italy, but from the outset South Africa were determined to play. From a driven maul, they used penalty advantage to throw the ball wide. Willemse — their attacking fly half — floated a wide ball to the supreme playmaking full back Le Roux with the help of a raft of dummy runners.

Before the Italians blinked, Arendse was scoring in the corner. Not many other Test nations have weapons such as him and Kolbe in the same back line.

Interestingly, South Africa's ruck speed during the autumn matches has been rapid. All three of their games are in the top ten for sides recycling the highest percentage of their ball within three seconds.

Despite losing to France and Ireland, they moved the ball from rucks within three seconds 70 and 69 per cent of the time. Only Italy against Australia (85 per cent), Ireland versus Fiji (74 per cent) and Fiji against Scotland (73 per cent) were quicker more often.

Of course, criticism of South Africa is all tied into the great debate around their banned director of rugby, Rassie Erasmus, below. His second suspension for criticising referees, two months after he returned from his first which lasted almost a year, is damaging the Springboks' reputation.

"Rassie has been at the forefront of a lot of debate and debacle over the past 18 months," Habana added. "I have the utmost respect for Siya [Kolisi] and the leaders in this group, who are able to continue doing what they're doing despite everything that's happening off the field."

The reality is, while Erasmus burns the house down, his team are quietly plotting their defence of the World Cup in France next year.



Erasmus's outbursts on referees are damaging for South Africa

Russell in talks with Bath after Racing offer pay cut

Mark Palmer

Finn Russell is holding discussions with Bath over a potential move to the Premiership club next summer.

However, it is understood that the Scotland fly half could yet extend his stay at Racing 92 or move to another Top 14 club in France.

The 30-year-old British & Irish Lion — who was controversially dropped from the Scotland squad this autumn before returning to produce spectacular back-to-back displays against New Zealand and Argentina — is coming out of contract at the Paris club, where he earns in excess of £800,000 a year.

Racing, where Stuart Lancaster will take over as director of rugby next summer, are believed to have offered Russell a substantial pay cut as they seek to finance the recruitment of the All Black fly half/full back Beauden Barrett and South Africa's World Cup-winning captain Siya Kolisi.

Bath, meanwhile, could free up cash by allowing up to three of Jonathan Joseph, Joe Cokanasiga and Piers Francis to depart, which would create scope for Russell to arrive as the marquee player whose wages can sit outside the £5 million salary cap under Premiership Rugby regulations.

However, it is believed that in addition to talking to Johann van Graan at Bath, Russell remains in negotiations with Racing and has also attracted the attentions of other French clubs including La Rochelle, the European champions where Ronan O'Gara is head coach.

Last year, Green Rockets Tokatsu, the Japanese side where Michael Cheika is director of rugby, tried to buy out the last two seasons of Russell's Racing deal, but in an interview with The Times in September, the former stonemason said he wanted to stay in France. Russell and his partner, Emma Canning, are due to welcome their first child any day.

"I spoke to Racing a little bit about it [a potential contract renewal] last year," Russell said in that interview. "Last year wasn't my best so I wasn't in a position to start demanding the figures I'd want. For me, this year, it's a case of get out and play as well as I can. Hopefully Racing still want me, but if not, that's how it goes."



Russell was involved in all eight tries against Argentina

Cuthbert stars for Chelsea

Chelsea *Ingle 67, Cuthbert 75*		2
Real Madrid		0

Women's Champions League
Molly Hudson

The first question Erin Cuthbert was asked when she stepped off the pitch, having scored a wonder goal from a ridiculous angle to light up an otherwise drab victory over Real Madrid, was "Did you mean it?"

It is unlikely she will care, the midfielder adding to a highlights reel that caused her to complain that people say she "only scores bangers" after another strike from range on Sunday. This goal, which she scored while hugging the touchline on the right flank, may well have been a cross, but, either way, it was the standout moment of the match.

"That's a secret," Cuthbert said, answering the obligatory question. "I meant to fire it across the goal and see what happens. It was lucky it came off my boot quite nicely and went over the keeper's head and in."

In a first half that was competing with a men's World Cup providing shocks aplenty, this was not a vintage opening. It was a distinct shift in surroundings from the crowd of more than 38,000 that flocked to Stamford Bridge to see Chelsea beat Tottenham 3-0 in Sunday's match, before this return to their usual home of Kingsmeadow to watch the first-ever meeting of their women's team against Real Madrid.

Chelsea have breezed through their opening group matches and lead the way with a perfect nine points from three matches. They started with the confidence of a team in form, Fran Kirby seeing her early strike parried away by Misa Rodríguez. Kirby's return from successive viral infections was key for Chelsea who have been rocked by the serious hamstring injury to fellow forward Pernille Harder which has ruled her out for a "significant period".

The bright start prefaced a half devoid of chances and it was fitting that the opener came from a set piece, given the difficulty both teams had in open play. A Millie Bright flick-on found the head of Sophie Ingle who nodded in from close range. Then came Cuthbert's wonder strike.

"She [Cuthbert] was outstanding," the Chelsea manager Emma Hayes said. "I don't think there was a blade of grass she didn't cover."

Chelsea (4-3-3): A-K Berger 8 — N Charles 8, K Buchanan 7, M Bright 8, M Eriksson 7 — E Cuthbert 9, S Ingle 8, F Kirby 7 (J Fleming 56, 6) — J Rytting Kaneryd 6 (L James 56, 6), S Kerr 7, G Reiten 7 (J Carter 79).
Real Madrid (4-3-3): M Rodríguez 6 — K Robles 6, K Sousa 6, I Andres 6, O Carmona 6 (N Garcia 80) — C Zornoza 6 (S Toletti 86), F Olofsson 7 (R Galvez 80), M Oroz 6 — C Weir 7, E González 7 (C Moller 86), N Feller 6 (S Svava 63 6).
Booked González.
Referee M Caputi (It). **Attendance** 3,336.

Liverpool mourn Johnson

David Johnson, the former Liverpool and England striker, has died at the age of 71. Johnson scored 78 goals in 213 appearances during six trophy-laden years at Anfield, sandwiched between two spells with Everton and four years with Ipswich Town.

Born in Liverpool, the player nicknamed "The Doc" was one of only two players to score for Liverpool and Everton in Merseyside derbies and also scored six times in eight England appearances.

Guardiola signs extension

The Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has signed a two-year contract extension to keep him at the club until the summer of 2025.

Since 2016, the 51-year-old has won nine major trophies, including four Premier League titles.

Guardiola said in a statement from the club: "I am so pleased to be staying at Manchester City for another two years. I am happy and comfortable, and I have everything I need to do my job as best as possible."

Glazers set for £3.3bn after

Martyn Ziegler
Chief Sports Reporter



The Glazer family have invested precious little in Manchester United — yet six of them stand to make a fortune from the club's sale.

The children of the late Malcolm Glazer, who used huge bank loans to buy the club in 2005, have already benefited through dividends, share sales and directors' remuneration, and are now in line to make more than £500 million each if the club is sold.

Although United have spent heavily on transfers, that has all been financed by the club's income. According to the football finance blog Swiss Ramble, over the past ten years United are the only club whose owners have taken money out — £187 million. At just about every other top-flight team, their owners have put money in.

The six Glazer siblings — Joel, Avram, Kevin, Bryan, Darcie and Edward — all sit on the board of Red Football Joint Venture Ltd, the club's parent company, along with the New York-based lawyer Mitchell Nusbaum. They own about 75 per cent of the club now, so if it was sold for £5 billion — and it is understood that Raine Bank, which is handling the sale, is targeting more than that — then once the £636 million outstanding debt has been paid off, the Glazer siblings would share £3.3 billion, equivalent to £545 million each.

In the 17 years since the Glazers' takeover, about £1.2 billion has flowed out of the club in interest payments to service the debt, plus the dividend and directors' payments. It is little surprise, therefore, that the owners are so unpopular with the fans. The limited success on the pitch in recent years has heightened those feelings.

Joel is the chairman of Red Football, and he — and to a lesser extent Avram — began taking a more hands-on role in running the club in 2013, after Sir Alex Ferguson retired. The other siblings have little involvement. Joel, according to those who know him, has become a devout fan, watches every match on TV and is surrounded by United memorabilia, including a giant picture of George Best on the wall, in his Washington DC offices.

The Glazers bought United for £790 million in 2005, using a combination of a £265 million bank loan and £236 million in high-interest hedge-fund loans. By 2010, the overall debt had risen to £700 milliion and despite refinancing, it is still at £636 million, according to the most recent accounts.

The family have already cashed in from share sales on the New York Stock Exchange but have retained control over the club. Although their shareholding is now about 75 per cent, they have 95 per cent of the voting power, according to football finance author, Kieran Maguire.

The Glazers' shares carry ten votes each, while those on the stock exchange have only one vote each. The other main shareholders are investment funds, such as Ariel Investments Ltd and Lindsell Train Ltd.

Maguire said any buyer would have to make the same offer to the shareholders as to the Glazers, though they will not be obliged to sell.



Americans have fallen in love with English football, in part due to Ted Lasso

How United have performed

Manchester United won 42 per cent of Premier League matches last season - the lowest figure since the Glazers took over in 2005

Season	Win	Draw	Lose
2005-06	66%	21	13
2006-07	74	13	13
2007-08	71	16	13
2008-09	74	16	11
2009-10	71	11	18
2010-11	61	29	11
2011-12	74	13	13
2012-13	74	13	13
2013-14	50	18	32
2014-15	53	26	21
2015-16	50	24	26
2016-17	47	39	13
2017-18	66	16	18
2018-19	50	24	26
2019-20	47	32	21
2020-21	55	29	16
2021-22	42	26	32

The family, along with Ed Woodward, who became United's executive vice-chairman after helping secure the finance for the takeover, did spot the commercial opportunities around United and achieved huge growth in that area in the first ten years. Since 2016, that has flatlined, which may be another reason behind exploring a sale.

Maguire also believes that there are other reasons why the time looks right for a sale. As was the case with Liverpool's American owners, Fenway Sports Group — who made their own appeal for new investment earlier this month — the failures of Project Big Picture and the European Super League closed the door on ways of generating additional income streams, such as by selling their own TV rights for a number of matches.

The fact that the Todd Boehly-Clearlake consortium paid £4.25 billion for Chelsea will also have made the Glazers sit up and take notice.

"There are several factors which make a sale attractive, especially in the US," Maguire said. "They have seen the price paid for Chelsea, which was a loss-making company, they may feel there are no more obvious income streams on the horizon, and the cheap pound also makes it attractive to Americans."

Maguire says the *Ted Lasso* effect — the comedy-drama about an American coach who takes over a Premier League team — is significant. "I keep being told by top people in American finance how they have fallen in love with English football," he added.

United has been an incredible cash cow for the Glazers, and they have milked it for all they are worth. But the signs are there that, if not running dry, the flow is faltering. Three consecutive years of losses, being overtaken by Manchester City in terms of commercial income and overall revenues, the growing antagonism from the fan base and other good conditions for a sale should hasten the end of the Glazer era.



The six Glazer siblings — Joel, Avram, Kevin, Bryan and Edward, above, and Darcie, inset — own about 75 per cent of Manchester United so if the club was sold for £5 billion they would share £3.3 billion. Their ownership has been notable for heavy spending on transfers, such as the signing of Paul Pogba, right, and a drop in success on the field since the retirement of Ferguson, below





Owners 'couldn't afford

CONTINUED FROM BACK

as Amazon and Meta could be among those interested in looking at United because of their expertise. The banks also expect approaches from the Middle East, in particular from Dubai.

But the pursuit of Chelsea was dominated by big American sports investors and it is from that side of the Atlantic that the sales battle between United and Liverpool is likely to be fought. Boehly bought Chelsea after being selected from a shortlist of four groups, all of which were at least part-American.

Meanwhile David Beckham is said to be open to holding talks with potential buyers of United, according to a report in the Financial Times last night.

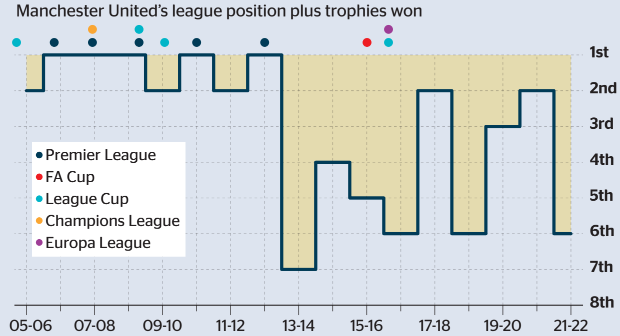
The former United midfielder's affinity with the club's fans might be of great value to a bidder and the report suggested Beckham would be prepared to become part of a bid.

There is no doubt that the sale of United and Liverpool has been prompted, in part, by the failure of the Premier League's "big six" to become part of a new European Super League. But it is also clear that United have acted now because of the decision by Liverpool's owners to put their club on the market.

United have fallen from the summit of English football since the retirement of Sir Alex Ferguson in 2013, and the Glazers now see the threat posed by the new owners at Stamford Bridge as well as the Saudis at Newcastle United and

Out of contention

Manchester United's league position plus trophies won



milking their cash cow dry

MICHAEL REGAN/GETTY IMAEGS; TIMES PHOTOGRPAHER MARC ASPLAND



Most valuable teams

In September, Forbes compiled their list of the 25 most valuable sports teams in the world.

1	Dallas Cowboys *American Football*	£6.64bn
2	New England Patriots *American Football*	£5.31bn
3	Los Angeles Rams *American Football*	£5.15bn
4	New York Yankees *Baseball*	£4.98bn
4	New York Giants *American Football*	£4.98bn
6	New York Knicks *Basketball*	£4.82bn
6	Chicago Bears *American Football*	£4.82bn
8	Golden State Warriors *Basketball*	£4.65bn
8	Washington Commanders *American Football*	£4.65bn
10	Los Angeles Lakers *Basketball*	£4.57bn
11	New York Jets *American Football*	£4.48bn
12	San Francisco 49ers *American Football*	£4.32bn
13	Real Madrid *Football*	£4.23bn
13	Las Vegas Raiders *American Football*	£4.23bn
15	Barcelona *Football*	£4.15bn
16	Philadelphia Eagles *American Football*	£4.07bn
17	Houston Texans *American Football*	£3.9bn
18	Denver Broncos *American Football*	£3.86bn
18	Manchester United *Football*	£3.86bn
18	Miami Dolphins *American Football*	£3.86bn
21	Seattle Seahawks *American Football*	£3.69bn
21	Liverpool *Football*	£3.69bn
23	Bayern Munich *Football*	£3.55bn
24	Manchester City *Football*	£3.53bn
24	Green Bay Packers *American Football*	£3.53bn

Ronaldo will have to serve two-game ban after joining new club

Paul Hirst

The FA has issued Cristiano Ronaldo with a two-match ban for smacking a phone out of a boy's hand — and he will have to serve the suspension at his new club.

The FA announced yesterday that Ronaldo had been suspended for two domestic games, fined £50,000 and warned about his future conduct after finding him guilty of improper and violent conduct relating to an incident that took place after United's 1-0 defeat by Everton in April.

Ronaldo angrily slapped the phone of a 14-year-old Everton fan to the ground as he stormed down the tunnel at Goodison Park.

Fifa's rules stipulate that domestic bans of up to four matches or up to three months must be served — even if a player leaves a club.

Article 12.1 of Fifa's regulations also states that the suspension must be enforced even if the player in question moves to a different country.

The ban does not apply to European or international tournaments, so Ronaldo is free to play in the World Cup with Portugal, who play their opening group-stage match against Ghana today.

Ronaldo is a free agent after he and United agreed to rip up his contract seven months early because of the controversial interview he gave on Talk TV to Piers Morgan.

The 37-year-old said he felt "betrayed" by the club and that he had no respect for Erik ten Hag, the United manager, because he tried to bring him off the bench for the last three minutes of the win over Tottenham Hotspur.

The FA released the documents relating to its case yesterday.

They showed that the four-man regulatory commission found that the slapping of the phone from the boy's hand was "a petulant act" from Ronaldo.

The commission said that Ronaldo would have been banned for three matches had he not immediately accepted the FA charge and issued a public apology to the boy.

The FA rejected Ronaldo's claim that he had "legitimate concern for his safety" when he left the pitch because in the area around the tunnel, some Everton fans had gathered.

In his written statement to the panel, Ronaldo said the atmosphere had been "feverish" at Goodison Park.

In a statement to the commission, David Newell, United's protection and security manager, said that some Everton supporters were "very abusive towards the MUFC players" as they walked off.

Ronaldo was cautioned by the police over the incident earlier this year and was ordered to pay the boy £200 in compensation.

After the incident, Ronaldo offered the boy a chance to come and watch a United game at Old Trafford by way of an apology.



Ronaldo was given the ban for slapping a phone out of a 14-year-old boy's hand in April

to lose out to Liverpool'

the Abu Dhabi riches at Manchester City. The number of potential buyers who could even contemplate buying United or Liverpool is already limited, and insiders have said that the Glazers could not afford to sit back and watch while their north west rivals secure a huge new cash injection.

Selling either club could take time. Raine certainly sees no reason to rush when, on this occasion, they do not have a Russian client with a deadline to complete the sale.

A United statement on Tuesday confirmed plans to identify "strategic alternatives", adding that the process will consider options "including new investment into the club, a sale, or other transactions involving the company".

The Glazers would only consider an investment deal that leaves them in control, but the desired outcome for a family that has owned United for the past 17 years amid fierce criticism from fans is a full sale. Having bought the club in 2005 in a £790 million deal funded principally by debt, the Glazers



Ratcliffe is a United fan but it is not clear if he would pay the asking price

Market reaction

Daily Manchester United share price in the past month



stand to make a big profit. The executive co-chairmen and directors, Avram and Joel Glazer, cited the club's fans in their statement. "The strength of Manchester United rests on the passion and loyalty of our global community of 1.1 billion fans and followers," they said. "We will evaluate all options to ensure that we best serve our fans."

'United fans will have no say due to lack of regulator'

Martyn Ziegler Chief Sports Reporter

Labour's shadow culture secretary has raised concerns that fans will have no say in the sale of Manchester United and the uncertainty over the future of Old Trafford.

Lucy Powell said the failure to introduce a football regulator meant there would be no independent oversight of the potential sale of the club by the Glazer family.

Labour is also claiming that, exactly a year on from the publication of Tracey Crouch's fan-led review which recommended a regulator, the failure of the Premier League to agree a deal to give more money to the English Football League [EFL] has cost lower-league clubs £365 million.

Powell told The Times: "Here we are with Manchester United and Liverpool potentially up for sale with no football regulator in place and the government has totally dragged its feet.

"The Glazers' statement appeared to suggest they are looking at options around the stadium – that could cause an even more complicated situation or even selling the ground. A football regulator would have oversight of the heritage assets of a club, as well as any financial tests to make sure plans for the club are sustainable. Without one, there will be no say for fans, no financial assessment of a new owner by an independent body.

"We are a year on from the fan-led review being published and nothing has happened."

Analysis by Labour and the EFL states the lack of action after the fan-led review meant lower league clubs will miss out on huge sums this season. The government has said it will publish a White Paper setting out options for a regulator, but Powell said only a statutory body similar to the Gambling Commission or Ofcom would be acceptable.

The EFL has proposed all football revenues be split so that 75 per cent goes to the Premier League and 25 per cent to the EFL clubs, which would have allowed its 72 clubs to share £365 million. The Premier League is, however, only prepared to agree to less than half of that subject to certain conditions.

Sport

Ahmed chases history
Leg spinner, 18, could become England's youngest Test player
Page 68



Scrums come first
Sinckler loves to attack but focuses on the fundamentals
Page 70



TIMES PHOTOGRAPHER MARC ASPLAND

Japan put Germany in deep peril

Germany	1
Japan	2

James Gheerbrant

Germany are in danger of going out at the group stage for the second World Cup in a row after a shock loss to Japan.

Ilkay Gundogan, the Germany and Manchester City midfielder, accused his team-mates of shirking responsibility during the defeat. A further loss to Spain on Sunday may end their hopes of reaching the last 16. Spain beat Costa Rica 7-0 yesterday. Gundogan said: "We lacked conviction. You got the feeling not everyone wanted the ball."

Before the match, Germany's players all covered their mouths with their hands as a protest against Fifa's refusal to allow them and a group of other nations including England to wear a rainbow armband during matches. The "One Love" armband is intended to promote diversity and inclusion. Hansi Flick, coach of Germany, who have won the tournament on four occasions, said: "It was a sign, a message. We wanted to deliver the message that Fifa is silencing us"

The Game, pages 2-3



Takuma Asano thumps the ball past Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer for the winner. Reports, The Game, World Cup special, inside

United aim to lure Liverpool suitors in USA

Matt Lawton, Matt Dickinson

Manchester United believe their vast global fanbase will lure Liverpool's potential buyers away from Anfield to Old Trafford, amid interest from American investors, the British billionaire Sir Jim Ratcliffe, and potentially even the internet giants Amazon and Meta, the owners of Facebook.

The Premier League's two biggest brands are now on the market, with the Glazers announcing on Tuesday that they are prepared to sell United, two weeks after Fenway Sports Group said it would be open to investment — possibly including a full sale — at Liverpool.

The clubs therefore now find themselves in direct opposition in their search for a new owner, even if United's asking price of £6 billion to £8 billion is double the value of the Merseyside club.

United claim to have 1.1 billion fans globally. Joe Ravitch, the US banker who oversaw Chelsea's sale and has been appointed by United to find potential buyers, told The Times: "United is not just a football club when it has such a huge global fanbase."

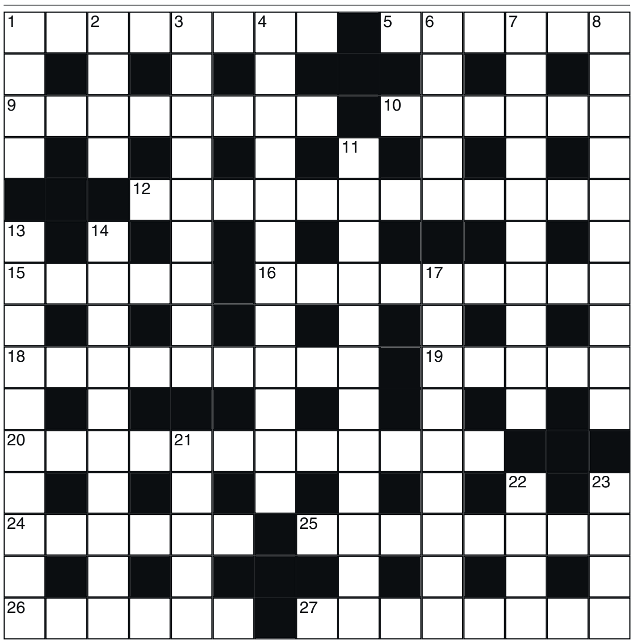
Ratcliffe, the Ineos founder who supports United, said in August that he wanted to bid for the club. But meetings between the 70-year-old and the Glazer family came to nothing, and it is not yet clear whether he would be prepared to offer anything close to the £6 billion price sought by the Glazers.

While Liverpool have enlisted the services of Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley in an effort to find a buyer, the Glazers have turned to Raine, the New York-based investment bank which sold Chelsea for Roman Abramovich to the American Todd Boehly-Clearlake Capital consortium in a deal worth £4.25 billion in May. Additionally, Rothschild and Co is acting as a financial adviser to the Glazer family shareholders.

One well-placed source suggested that tech and social media giants such

Continued on page 72

Times Crossword 28,456



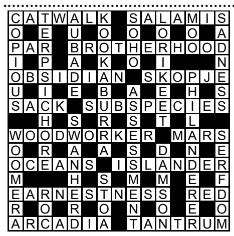
ACROSS

1 Group getting possessive pockets grand in racket (8)
5 It may be fruitful to curse housing thus (6)
9 Turn end of satire into laconic humour (8)
10 Sport, or cheating at it (6)
12 Little bit of drink with Polish and Gallic meal (6,6)
15 Go so far as to cover small animal, with love (3,2)
16 Air supplier in awfully hot minutes without oxygen (9)
18 Ship off clothes tried out where culture's displayed (5,4)
19 Pattern of suit jacket from Oxfam that's sent back (5)
20 What stockholder needs: smooth marketing at first (8,4)
24 Cool wine locked away (2,4)
25 Coming over, English cricket team fuel India's obsession (4,4)
26 Illegally seize something inherited during sleep (6)
27 Watcher of *The Birds*, one showing nervousness (8)

DOWN

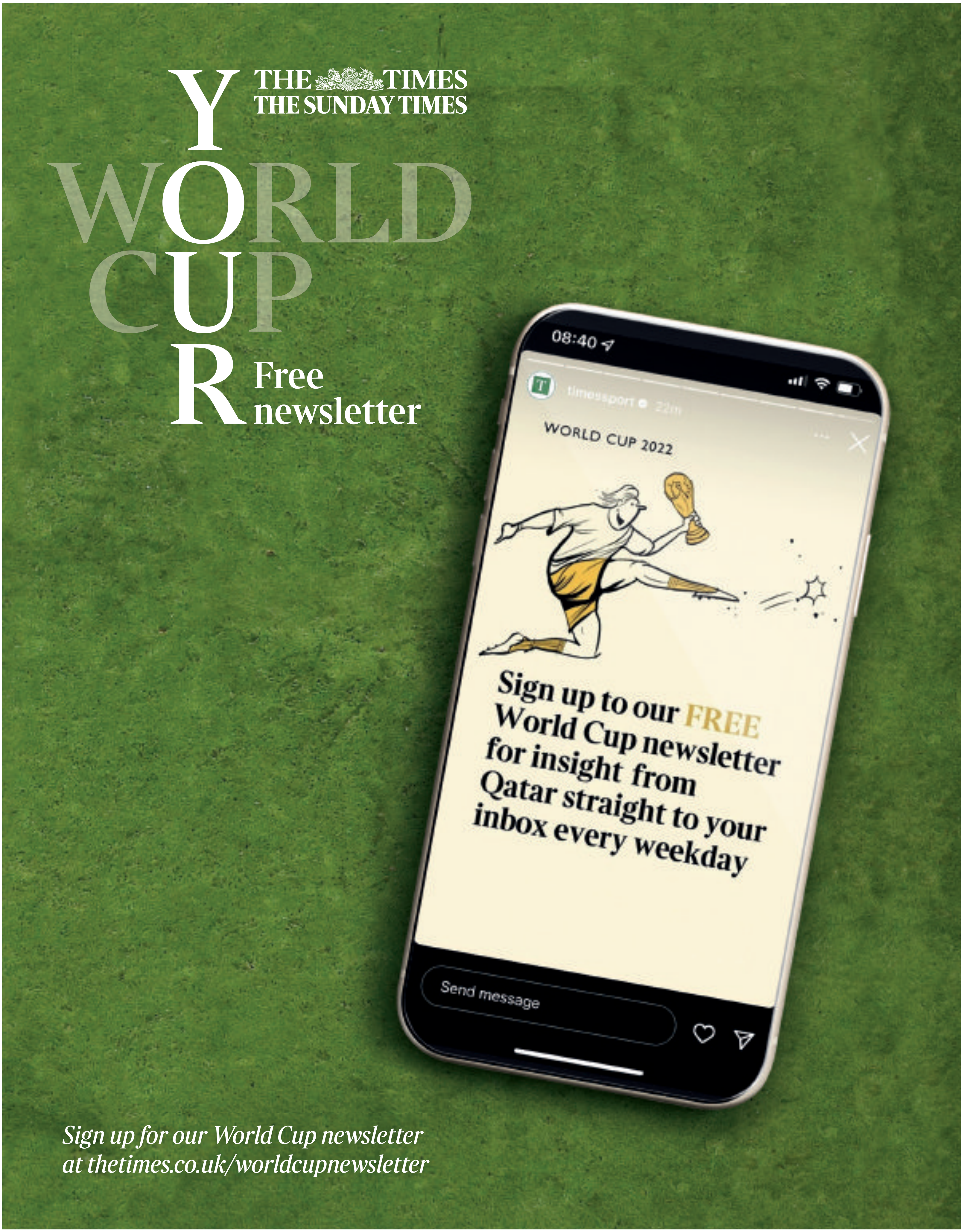
1 One needs cracking finale in epic verse (4)
2 One single bathroom for e.g. King Edward in Asia (4)
3 Rancour with current politics half vanishing in campaign (9)
4 Honourable and gentle, but one's less than grand? (7,5)
6 I'm leaving high grade university, securing pass (5)
7 Female dressing, wearing furs? They're tight (10)
8 Almost time to accompany key group working late (5,5)
11 Vent, perhaps, without revolving glass door (6,6)
13 Lack tact in work, punching dull pain in the neck (4,1,5)
14 Single, horrid taunt caused pain (10)
17 Men lost on manoeuvres inclined to retire? (9)
21 Moving day in a country house (5)
22 Slip again on horse (4)
23 Endlessly long time (4)

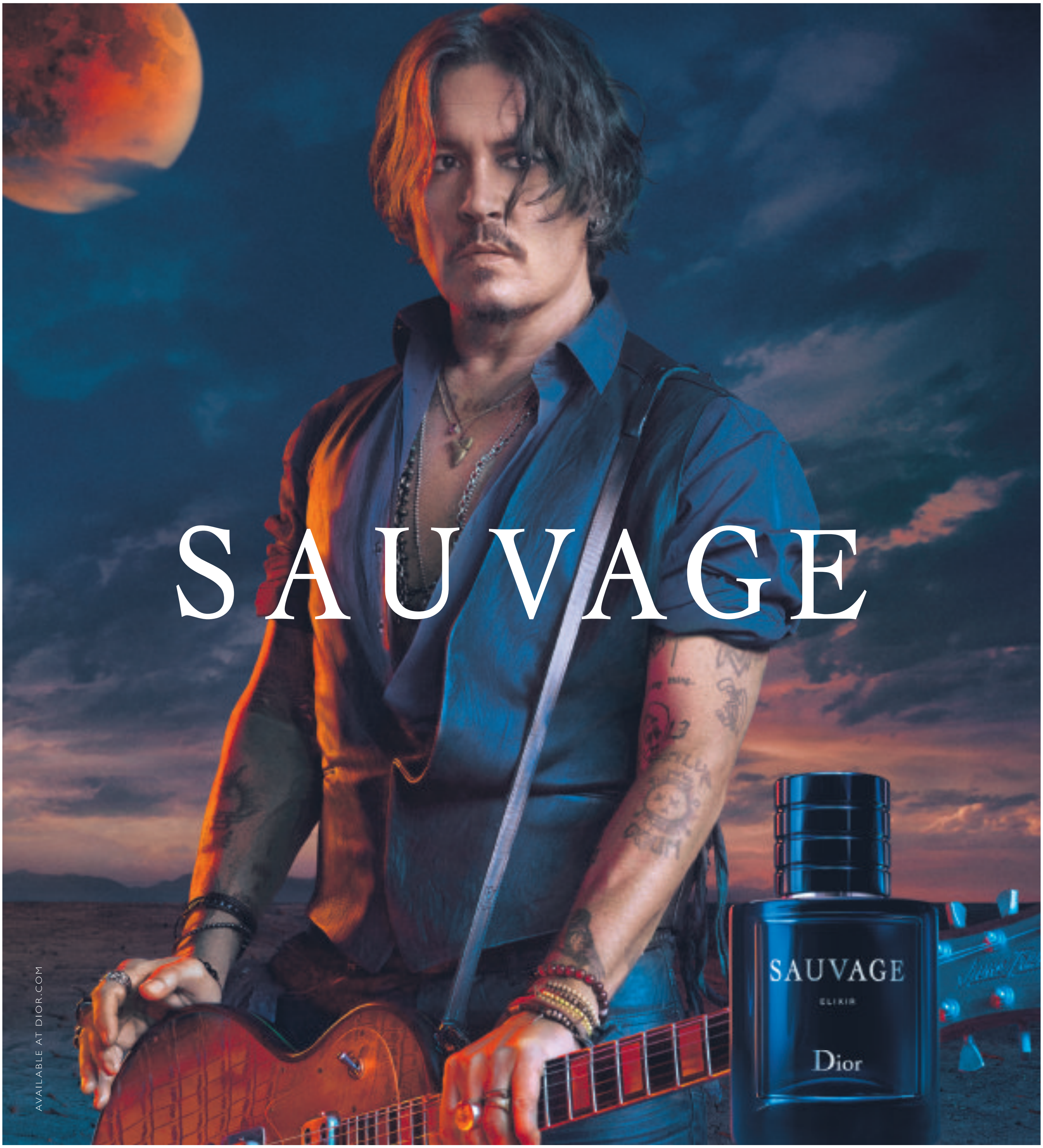
Yesterday's solution 28,455



Check today's answers by ringing 0905 757 0141 by midnight. Calls cost £1 per minute plus your telephone company's network access charge. SP: Spoke 0333 202 3390.

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